Education and the Public Understanding of Morality

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Abstract

The theme 'the public understanding of morality' is introduced through a comparison with the idea of the public understanding of science. The argument proper starts in Part I with an overview of diversity of values in contemporary society. It is argued that it is important for education to promote the understanding of this diversity, but that this does not preclude an attempt at the same time to promote a shared understanding of morality. Consideration of the work of the 'National Forum for Values in Education and the Community' is used to show a way of narrowing down the whole field of values to a particular conception of morality.

Part II looks further into this idea of 'morality in the narrow sense' and considers what kind of language - one of norms or one of virtues - is appropriate for articulating it. The discussion is made more concrete by reference to attitudes to violence. It is concluded that while both kinds of language are important, a language of norms has a certain priority in the articulation of morality in the narrow sense.

Part III defends the idea of a morality of norms against some recent criticisms, and considers the public, including the educational, role of moral norms. Part IV tries to show how the understanding of morality which has been outlined can have some motivational force and be seen to have some authority. It is argued that the promotion of an understanding of morality, conceived in the way outlined, can appropriately be seen as a task for citizenship education. In an Epilogue it is suggested that the promotion of the public understanding of morality is a contribution to the moral development of society.

Contents

Preface

'It is important that as few people as possible should think about morality - consequently it is very important that morality should not one day become interesting.'

Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, section 228 (Nietzsche 1973)

In the past few years I have written a number of pieces on or related to moral education.[1] Some of these have since been published, others are in the pipeline, some I shall probably no longer use in their original form. Many of these pieces have been written in response to specific requests for conference papers or chapters for edited volumes. They have therefore been one-off pieces, each intended to stand by itself.

However, I often saw what I was doing as fitting into certain continuing wider concerns. Among these were: that a certain strand of thought about morality - one which emphasised principles, reason, and a sense of obligation - was being too easily downplayed in much recent writing on moral education; that much recent thinking about moral education was too individualistic, paying too little attention to the social dimensions of morality; and (academic concerns apart) that teachers were getting far too little preparation for their role in moral education.

In some cases in the last three years or so I have written one or other of these pieces with the idea in mind that it could form a chapter of the doctoral thesis for which I was registered. But alongside this there was an occasional doubt as to whether the various pieces did actually fit together.

What particularly raised this doubt in my own mind was a piece I wrote for the Essay Competition run by the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain. The theme that year was:

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[1] My first forays into the topics of this thesis were still earlier: Haydon(1986) and (1987b). I would not now entirely endorse the position I took then, and have only briefly referred to one of those pieces in this thesis.

Education, Law and Morality. I took advantage of the anonymity of the judging process (at least in its early stages, I presume) to argue a certain case without being sure how far I wanted to endorse it. I supported the idea that morality should be seen as analogous to law, conscious in doing this that I was arguing against a very widespread tendency in recent moral philosophy, and philosophical writing on moral education, to reject lawlike conceptions of morality.

(No prize was awarded in the Essay Competition that year; the judges concluded that no essay had sufficiently addressed all three elements of the theme. In the case of my own piece I have no problem agreeing. My essay said a lot about morality, not much about law, and still less about education. In this thesis there is still a lot about morality and not much about law, but I trust there will be rather more about education. If that is not apparent from the list of contents, it is because education is in my mind, and often referred to, throughout.)

Although I was able to submit an anonymous essay without being sure whether I agreed with it, it was still true that I had written it; and that I had said or written other things which hardly seemed consistent. In my own teaching in a course on moral education I had treated the idea that morality is a system of rules as a starting point to be put on one side before moving on to more interesting matters, about caring and virtues for instance. And I had written in a *TES* article that 'because these are the values of your society' is no answer to the pupil who asks how we can know that something is right. (For that I was charged by the journalist Melanie Phillips with being a relativist whose lack of clear guidance was likely to lead pupils into Nazism - see Chapter 11 below.) But here in the competition essay I was arguing not only that morality can be seen as a system of rules but also that the authority that these rules carry is the authority of society.

Meanwhile I had also been invited to be a member of the Forum for Values in Education and the Community set up by the School

Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA).[2] This Forum came up with a list of values which it claimed were shared across the whole community. Predictably, many philosophers of education were sceptical about the whole procedure; to quote from a volume which I shall often refer to in this thesis: 'the Forum sells morality and moral education short by appearing to rely on empirical evidence for claims that can only rest on ethical and philosophical argument' (*TRAW* p.142; see below). But I went along with the Forum's statement of Values; I even defended it in various seminars. I went along too with some of the official educational jargon, giving talks to PGCE students about spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - though always, I liked to think, with a certain critical distance.

Well, perhaps I was just being postmodernist, changing hats and keeping an ironic detachment. But was there actually a consistent position behind all of this? Perhaps the only way to find out was to see if I could put it all together into a thesis. At one time I thought that the various pieces I had written could simply form so many chapters of the thesis. I had even toyed with the idea that perhaps, given postmodernism, a thesis didn't have to present a linear argument. Perhaps it could be a juxtaposition of different perspectives, open to the reader to take them in any order.

Convention, however, has won out (at least as regards the form of the thesis). Simply juxtaposing different pieces might well have left the reader wondering why I thought they fitted together at all.[3] There is a good deal here of pieces I have already written for other purposes, but there has been a lot of rewriting and new writing too. I have avoided very much direct overlap with my own *Teaching about Values: A New Approach* (Haydon 1997), but

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[2]Acronyms and abbreviations used in this thesis are listed in the Glossary.

[3] It would also have failed to meet the criteria for a London University PhD. The relevant part of the regulations states:
'The thesis shall .... be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;
[A series of papers, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable as a thesis; work already published .... may be included only if it forms an integral part of the thesis and is in the same format as the rest of the thesis...']

I refer to it (abbreviated as *T A V*) in cases where points made only briefly here are ones which I have taken further there.

More or less concurrently with the bulk of the work on this thesis I was preparing a monograph for the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain[4]. In that I asked whether and how schools should be trying, through moral education, to respond to a perceived problem of violence in society.[5] Originally I thought the monograph on violence would be a quite separate work from this thesis; in the event there is considerable overlap between the two, partly through time constraints in preparing the monograph, and partly because of convergence in my own thinking on the themes of the two pieces of work. What I have said about violence in the monograph is less developed than I would like it to be; I would have hesitated to put it forward as part of a doctoral thesis on violence. I did, however, find it interesting to explore the kind of language that is used in public discourse about violence; and since that exploration, underdeveloped though it is, serves as an illustration of a more general theme pursued here, I have incorporated some of the material on violence into this thesis.

Overall, then, though I have not done the calculations, I think the amount of material in this thesis which is recycled from work already published or written prior to 1998 is less than the amount of newly written material. (I append at the end a more detailed note on my sources within my own work either published or awaiting publication.)

As regards my subject matter, if this has to be encapsulated in a single brief phrase (for purposes of library classification, for instance) then a phrase I have already used, 'moral education', will be the least misleading label available, but I could also make a case for the label 'citizenship education'. The notion of moral

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[4] *Values, Virtues and Violence: Education and the Public Understanding of Morality.* Published as a Special Issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* Vol. 33, 1, 1999 (Haydon 1999a) and forthcoming as a book from Blackwell.

[5] My interest in this question stemmed in part from some earlier work I did on peace education for the Oxford Project for Peace Studies.

education will probably carry certain baggage in the reader's view, and by the end of the thesis he or she may well feel that I have simply left some of that baggage by the roadside, while picking up other assorted items along the way. I shall have to define my own field of concern. I label this field by the phrase 'public understanding of morality', and I shall also use later the term 'moral development of society'. I am emphasising certain public and social aspects of morality, and arguing that schools have an important role in promoting these; citizenship education would be an appropriate area of the curriculum in which to promote them. Pragmatically, since citizenship education is going to be a part of the National Curriculum for England, while moral education is not (at least not under that name), my ideas are more likely to make a difference if presented under the former label.[6]

For the moment, I shall say that my concern is primarily with cognitive aspects of moral education and - what is not the same - of education about morality. I take it that any full account of moral education must pay attention to aspects of people's experience which are not only cognitive in character. So in concentrating on cognitive aspects I am in this respect narrowing my focus, acknowledging that there is much that needs to be said about moral education that I am not attempting to say in this thesis. But I am also in a different way attempting to broaden the focus of attention beyond that of much writing on moral education. I believe that the conditions of life in a plural democratic society make cognitive demands on citizens in the area of morality (a deliberately vague phrase which awaits unpacking) which are not always recognised but which need to be taken very seriously within education: the implications of this may also go beyond formal education in the sense of schooling.

The term 'morality' is not itself, of course, unproblematic. There are various forms of scepticism abroad about morality; some of

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[6] My experience at a conference on citizenship education at the Institute of Education in July 1999, at which I presented some of my thinking about the public understanding of morality, suggested that many teachers may agree with me that citizenship education must not lose sight of (ideas about) morality.

these might undermine the idea that there can be such a thing as the public understanding of morality. I can best respond to such problems by taking them up in the course of my discussion of the kind of understanding that is desirable. The bulk of the thesis, in fact, attempts to unpack a notion of morality, 'in the narrow sense', which is, so to speak, suitable for public consumption and for educational use.

That aim impinges on my choice of literature, in which I have been pragmatically selective. I have not neglected the recent and important turn within much moral philosophy towards virtue ethics and an ethic of care, but for my purposes there is a good deal of older work - that is, work published in the seventies and eighties - which is still relevant and on which I have drawn. Again, as regards the philosophical literature on moral education I have not tried to give a comprehensive review but have referred to trends which are common within that literature. I have found one recent collection of papers particularly useful as a reference point, as it seems to me pretty representative of mainstream writing on moral education within recent British philosophy of education: *Teaching Right and Wrong*, edited by Standish and Smith (referred to frequently as *TRAW*).

This thesis is intended as a contribution to the literature of philosophy of education and also, though secondarily, to that of moral philosophy. In so far as I claim to have made an original contribution, it is in relation to the philosophy of education literature. Here to some degree I am trying to counter the tendency in much recent philosophical writing on moral education - influenced by MacIntyre and other neo-Aristotelians - to turn to virtue ethics. I am not, however, trying to overturn that tendency; it is rather a matter of redressing the balance.

It should be clear by now that the quotation from Nietzsche (who will make only a few more appearances in this thesis) at the head of the Preface is not so much a motto for my thesis as an anti-

motto.[7] It expresses almost the opposite of what I want to argue. It is important - especially now, in a plural, democratic, late modern society - that as many people as possible should think about morality. And, despite Nietzsche, I think morality *is* interesting and that education should treat it as such, and not try to avoid the topic.

Outline of argument

In the Prologue I present a comparison between two ideas: the public understanding of science and the public understanding of morality. Though nothing in the rest of the thesis is intended to turn on this comparison, it serves to introduce and raise questions about the understanding of morality which the general public has or might have. Should education be trying to promote a shared understanding of morality? And if so, what particular understanding is that to be?

In Part I emphasise the context of value-diversity in which thinking about moral education, and values education more generally, has to go on. I argue that it is important for education to promote understanding of this diversity, but I also ask whether there could at the same time be a shared understanding of morality. Referring to the SCAA Forum (mentioned above) I show one way in which one might distinguish seeking a common morality from simply seeking common values.

In Part II I first, in Chapter Four, outline a particular - and familiar - conception of morality which is putatively a conception which could be widely shared: morality in the narrow sense, or morality(n). I then consider what kind of language is appropriate for the articulation of morality(n) as a publicly shared conception of morality. This discussion arises largely from the recent advocacy in the literature of the merits of an ethics of virtue rather than an ethics of norms. (It is also interesting to consider whether a language confined to rights-talk could do the job of

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[7] Long after I first used this quotation in a draft of this Preface, Anthony O'Hear used the same quotation in the Booknotes section of *Philosophy* (Vol. 73, no. 285, July 1998, p. 525). Unlike myself, I think O'Hear is inclined to agree with Nietzsche's point.

morality(n), but since this discussion is not central to my main argument I have put it in an Appendix.) Having shown some of the problems with virtue-language, I try to illustrate with reference to the particular example of our discourse about violence that we cannot dispense with either a language of norms or a language of virtues.

At this stage it still seems to me that a language of norms has a certain priority in the articulation of morality(n). But since norms - or rules and principles - have come in for heavy criticism in the recent pro-virtue literature, a positive defence of their role is needed. This is the task of Part III. I reply to a number of objections to rules, consider the role that rules and principles can play in moral thought and discourse, and attempt an overview of the public functions of moral norms.

I take the arguments of Parts II and III to be sufficient to allow me, in the remainder of the thesis, to assume a language of norms, even though some of the questions remaining would arise for morality(n) in whatever language it is articulated. In Part IV I consider a group of questions which need to be answered if morality(n) is to be understood (not just as an intellectual construct but) as a social institution which can be effective. Why should anyone take notice of it, as it bears on their own conduct? Does it incorporate any understanding of moral motivation? Can it be seen as having any authority? And how far can we suppose that there could be agreement on its content? In answering these questions I begin to show the role that schools can have in promoting and maintaining morality(n), arguing that there is a role here for citizenship education in particular.

In the Epilogue, as a less pragmatic conclusion, I try to show how education which promotes the public understanding of morality can be seen as contributing to the moral development of society.

Glossary of acronyms and abbreviations

Education as a field of study is beset with acronyms which its academic practitioners need to know (though moral philosophers do not). Clearly one way of making an original contribution to knowledge in this field is to add a few more. Here is my annotated list of acronyms and abbreviations which occur in this thesis. Only those marked with an asterisk are my inventions; the rest are genuine (i.e. someone else's invention).

DfEE	The Department for Education and Employment
ERA	The Education Reform Act of 1988 (applying to England and Wales).
GTC	The General Teaching Council, a professional body for teachers, established in recent legislation, and due to begin its work in September 2000.
*morality(n)	This is simply a short way of writing the words 'morality (in the narrow sense)'. What this means is explained in the text (see especially Chapter 4).
NCC	National Curriculum Council (defunct): set up to oversee the National Curriculum which was established by ERA.
OFSTED	The Office for Standards in Education - the agency overseeing the inspection of schools.
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education: A one-year course by which graduates enter the teaching profession - often without any systematic preparation for their role in values education.
PSE	Personal and Social Education: a recognised area of the curriculum in most British schools, not always separately timetabled, not statutory, not taught by specialists, not assessed, and (therefore?) not always taken seriously.

PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education: as above, plus the explicit incorporation of health education. At the time of writing 'PSHE' may well be the commoner term, and is likely to become standard following QCA and DfEE documents published in1999 which stress the importance of PSHE (though without laying down statutory requirements for it).
*PUM	The public understanding of morality (by analogy with PUS).
*(The) PUMA	An imaginary beast: The Public Understanding of Morality Authority, charged with the promotion of PUM. Given the complications of distinguishing, in an earlier draft, what I was arguing in my own right from what I was arguing that the PUMA would argue, its role in this thesis is vestigial.
PUS	The public understanding of science (I was sceptical about this acronym but have seen it in print).
QCA	The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority: successor to SCAA. Has continued SCAA's work on values education, piloting materials in schools.
RE	Religious Education, which some people think is the main part of the curriculum in which morality should be addressed.
SCAA	The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (defunct). Successor to NCC and the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) (defunct). In 1996 SCAA set up the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community - thereby arguably doing something to promote PUM. Succeeded by QCA in 1997.
SCAA Forum	The National Forum for Values in Education and the Community - as above. This produced in 1997 a Statement of Values (sometimes referred to below as the SCAA Forum

	Statement). This, with its Preamble, is included here as Appendix 3, and is also included, with an introduction by Nick Tate and Marianne Talbot, in *TRAW.*
SMSC	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (development): areas of education which ERA, and further legislation of 1992, has required teachers and OFSTED to attend to.
**TAV*	My own *Teaching about Values: A New Approach* (Haydon 1997). In the present thesis I have tried to avoid reproducing material from that, but have sometimes noted points of contact.
TES	*The Times Educational Supplement*
**TRAW*	*Teaching Right and Wrong,* Richard Smith & Paul Standish (eds), Trentham 1997. A recent collection which I often refer to, as being a good example of recent British philosophical writing about moral education. My review of this is included here as Appendix 1.
TTA	The Teacher Training Agency: oversees the professional training (or education? - see next entry) received by entrants into teaching, and has funding powers to back up its prescriptions.
UCET	Universities Council for the Education of Teachers: a body representing the University Education Departments which are engaged in the professional education (or training? - see previous entry) of teachers.
VEC	The Values Education Council of the United Kingdom: an umbrella organisation for a variety of existing organisations concerned with moral education, citizenship education and the like. Established 1995.
**VVV*	My own *Values, Virtues and Violence* (Haydon 1999a)

Prologue: the public understanding of science and the public understanding of morality

I have formed the phrase 'the public understanding of morality' by analogy with 'the public understanding of science'. The latter is a well-established idea, having led to the establishment of at least two University Chairs in the subject (in the Universities of Oxford and London) and to regular attempts, not just within educational institutions but also in the media, to contribute to such understanding. The arguments I want to make in this thesis do not depend on any comparison between the public understanding of science (PUS) and the public understanding of morality (PUM), and everything that comes after this Prologue is intended to stand independently of such a comparison. Nevertheless, a comparison in this Prologue between the ideas of PUS and PUM will help to bring out my area of interest in the thesis. I do not want to say that every aspect of the meaning of PUS can be transferred to PUM without alteration: there will be disanalogies as well as analogies. Even if the reader is not persuaded that the analogies are at all strong, I can retain the phrase 'the public understanding of morality' as a useful shorthand label.

Active concern about the public understanding of science rests on the beliefs, not only that such understanding is important, but also that currently the general public's understanding of science is inadequate. Similarly, my investigations in this thesis presuppose both that the public understanding of morality is important, and that in its current state it is inadequate. As regards inadequacies in the understanding of science, one could say that public conceptions of science are currently in a confused state, where the confusion may be largely a matter of different people having different views, but may also in part be a matter of some people individually having inconsistent attitudes. There is sometimes a considerable faith in science; more often perhaps an unthinking acceptance. But there is also considerable scepticism, distrust of experts and sometimes hostility, along with a sometimes credulous belief in or 'going-along-with' all sorts of pseudo-science or anti-

science. (Examples of all kinds can be found in television documentaries and magazine programmes.)

For morality, there is sometimes an apparently naive belief that the answers are perfectly clear (as when confident appeal is made to 'absolutes') but also again considerable scepticism, a belief that it is all up to the individual, distrust of any claims to moral authority, and sometimes the view that morality is of no importance alongside the real business of politics, economics or whatever. My claim that the public understanding of morality is inadequate does not rest on a claim that any particular one of these beliefs or attitudes is false; it is rather the claim that this confused state of affairs itself is inadequate in a democracy of more-or-less educated persons - since to the extent that there is this confusion, a society is less able to function *as* a democracy of educated persons. In case that is not enough already to establish the claim of importance, I shall come back briefly below to the importance of both PUS and PUM; but for the most part I shall rely on my arguments in the body of the thesis about the form and content of PUM to establish that its current state falls far short of what is desirable.

The idea of comparing PUS and PUM may give rise to an initial misunderstanding which I need to clear out of the way. Science is often taken - not least perhaps in the perception of some of the lay public - as an area in which objectivity and knowledge are above all to be found. It might seem, then, that in order to make my comparison stand up I would also have to treat morality as an area of objectivity and knowledge - that I would have to defend some kind of realist theory of morality. Many people have, of course, taken such a view of morality; but at the beginning of a thesis it can hardly be adequate either to presume such a view, or to set out to defend it in a few paragraphs. Fortunately I do not have to do either, because my interest in this Prologue is in comparing science and morality as ongoing areas of human discourse.

Here it might still seem important to know whether some area of human discourse has reference to objects existing independently of that discourse or not. Science is still perhaps standardly - though not without dispute - taken to be referring to objects independent of science itself: cells, rocks, planets and so on. And the disputes in moral philosophy have often been about whether morality has reference to some kind of objects - perhaps values - existing independently of moral discourse. Does it make sense to address morality as an area of discourse without trying to settle such metaethical questions?

I think it does, because even if values could somehow exist independently of discourse, they could not make a difference to our lives except through thought and language.[1] To put it in a way which admittedly would have to be unpacked at greater length in a different kind of thesis (a metaethical one) values do not literally push or pull us: our *conceptions* of values move us. Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV (Part 1)* was in a sense right when he said 'What is honour? a word.', though we should expand this to say that honour is a concept which can only exist because there are language-using beings whose form of life has a place for such concepts. This is in no way to deny the force that a value such as honour (or justice, or respect for life, or recognition of human rights) can have in the world. As Falstaff was well aware beneath his cynicism, values can move people to act in ways which the biologically-given motivations which we share with other animals, by themselves, never could.

So, values have their effective existence within the realm of human discourse. This means that there is a sense in which the continued existence of a value depends on its continuing to feature in discourse. A notion such as 'human rights', as moral philosophers including MacIntyre (1981, p.67) have pointed out, has a history; it is quite a recent and geographically local invention (going back only a few centuries, and coming from

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[1] Moral discourse does not, of course, refer only to objects whose existence is in dispute; it also describes and evaluates things which clearly do exist, even if not independently of human understanding: actions, emotions and so on.

Western Europe), but by now it seems to be pretty firmly established in moral and political discourse. On the other hand, in certain cultures the concept of honour has ceased to have an effective existence.[2] Much the same perhaps applies to chastity. What all this is leading to is that *talk* about values is not incidental to their existence; it is their life-blood.

There is more to be said about the ways in which both science and morality function as forms of discourse. Certainly I am taking it that PUS is not meant to involve only an understanding of the *objects* which science studies, but also an understanding of the activity of science itself; and similarly I take PUM to be at least in part an understanding of the human area of discourse and concern which we call 'morality'. On that basis I can begin to make the comparison more detailed.

Science as a compartment of human thought (if we can allow for compartments which may have rather fluid boundaries) depends on interpersonal communication and understanding. It is not possible that in the history of human thought there could have been just one and only one person doing science. I take this to be a thoroughly familiar thought, which is common ground among modern commentators on science (at least from Popper and Kuhn onwards). There is not, so far, anything special to science here; the broader point is about any disciplined field of thought and inquiry; in a certain sense, it has to be public. The point is familiar within philosophy of education and is perhaps especially associated with Hirst's (1974) forms of knowledge thesis, but it does not commit one to that particular thesis.

But the fact that a disciplined form of thought and inquiry has to be public in the sense of involving interpersonal communication, understanding, criticism and so on, does not imply that it must be public in the sense of being understood, let alone participated in, by the *general* public. Sub-atomic particle physics is a public form of knowledge (in what we might call the epistemological sense)

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2 On honour cf. Berger (1983). Further aspects of the diversity of values will be taken up in Chapter 1.

within which only a small percentage of the population is capable of operating.

There is nothing epistemologically incoherent in the idea of a form of knowledge being in fact only accessible to a few; but it is not an epistemological worry which motivates the concern for PUS. The motivation involves practical concerns which may themselves in part be moral ones. One such concern is for the health of science itself. While science does not have a direct epistemological dependence on its being understood within a wide rather than a narrow public, its continuing existence does depend on the continuation of scientific education to a sufficient level for a sufficient number of people; and the continuation both of scientific education and scientific research may depend practically on the degree of understanding of a wide public, since (within a democratic political system) science ultimately depends on public support for much of its funding. But there is also a concern in the other direction, a concern about the public good (where 'public' is understood in the broad sense). The public is affected by much that goes on under the name of science (while many of the practical effects which the public associates with scientific advance are directly an outcome of developments in technology rather than science as such, the public is not wrong in recognising that a great deal of modern technology is dependent on science). In some cases the effects on the broader public are matters of its material conditions of life (a concern for these underlies at least some of the concerns about despoliation of the environment); in other cases, as sometimes with advances in medical techniques, the effects, quite apart from any material benefits or harms, raise moral worries.

Whatever kind of effect we have in mind, there is a political argument for citizens being empowered to make decisions over issues that can powerfully affect them; and empowerment, over many issues in the modern world, requires an understanding of science. So part of the idea behind PUS is that science is too important to be the preserve only of experts; the general public needs an understanding of science too. I want to say that the

same goes for morality; the moral aspects of life are both so all-pervasive for individuals, and so inescapable at the public level, that morality also is too important to be left to experts.

At this point it might seem to the reader that the analogy has already broken down; it is, after all, something of a commonplace in modern liberal philosophical thinking that there are *no* moral experts.[3] Nevertheless, there is a kind of understanding of morality which *is* to a large extent now the preserve of experts, and ought to be less so. I shall try to bring that out by pursuing the PUS/PUM analogy further.

Morality as a public form of thought

One difficulty in pursuing the analogy is that I cannot assume an uncontested notion of morality at the beginning of my argument. At this stage I have to proceed, so far as possible, on the basis of assumptions (my own) about the nature of morality which I shall only later focus attention on directly. First, then, I have already said that I am approaching morality as an area or form of human discourse. This would, of course, be controversial if I were claiming that *there is nothing to morality but* human discourse, but I am not making that claim. Even apart from the metaethical questions about realism, I do not want to deny that there is much that we may be concerned with when we speak of morality - most particularly, how people behave, as well as aspects of their attitudes and responses to others - which is hardly captured, and certainly not covered exhaustively, by reference to public language. Nevertheless, treating morality as a public form of thought does not exclude many, if any, of the positions that are likely to be encountered in current debates in moral philosophy and in philosophical writing about moral education.

1) It does not exclude the claim that the public, linguistic, aspects of morality rest on certain capacities or tendencies which are pre-linguistic (plausibly, ones which have evolved by natural selection). That there may be a pre-linguistic, perhaps pre-human,

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[3] Within philosophy of education, cf. e.g. White, J. (1973), and White, P. (1983).

basis no more undermines the nature of morality as a public form of discourse than would the parallel claim about science undermine its similar nature. Science, too, plausibly rests on certain pre-linguistic capacities and tendencies (e.g. perceptual capacities and, possibly, a tendency to try to make sense of experience and to investigate the new which may well not be peculiar to the human species). But a pre-linguistic basis for science would not itself be science, and a pre-linguistic basis for morality would not be morality. There is an innocuous sense in which both science and morality can plausibly be seen as cultural constructs on the basis of biologically-given human capacities.[4] (There are also, of course, other senses in which the claims that these are cultural constructs may be far from anodyne.)

2) Treating morality as unintelligible without reference to language, hence to something publicly shared, does not commit me to some particular position within many of the current debates in moral philosophy. For instance, the current state of debate is often represented as a controversy between, on the one hand, theories which give a large role to rational, articulated thought in terms of rules or principles, and on the other, conceptions which put weight on perception, affect and motivation, often crystallised around the notion of virtues. I shall come back to this supposed dichotomy in Part II; but for the moment, lest it should appear that in emphasising public language I am lending weight to the 'rules and principles' side of the debate, it is worth pointing out that the 'virtue theorists' (overlapping with communitarians) have to emphasise the public, shared nature of the ethical life. Both sides in this sparring are seeing morality as a phenomenon of social, language-using beings (as is very clearly the case with Aristotle), albeit when they have occasion to focus directly on language they may pick out different functions of language and highlight different vocabularies.

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[4] See many of the writings of Mary Midgley. As this paragraph suggests, I would myself wish to take a broadly naturalistic view of morality (in common with many recent writers, such as Gibbard and Blackburn), but my arguments for the promotion of a shared public understanding of morality are not intended to rule out other views.

Indeed, if either side in this debate were able to claim that morality is not a public form of thought it would be the 'principles' side, or at least one tendency within that side of the debate. One might understand Kant to be saying that there is innate in each human individual (*qua* rational) the capacity to think and to act morally; that this capacity does not have to be learned from experience (indeed could not be learned from experience, but only by the exercise of reason); and that the capacity can be exercised by an individual even if all around him or her are failing to exercise it. Thus morality is not necessarily social, in that a single individual can think morally and can consciously act, or fail to act, morally. Now, such a thesis is certainly controversial, in more than one way, and recent thinkers who have considered themselves to be in certain ways Kantian have moved towards a more explicitly social interpretation of morality.[5] But for current purposes I think all we need to note is that an individual, in order to think morally, has to have the language in which to think, and that language must have been acquired, which presupposes a social environment in which the language is used. (A point which I shall not argue further here because I think it will hardly be controversial, but which might be supported in different ways both by empirical psychological arguments and by broadly Wittgensteinian philosophical arguments).

3) If treating morality as a public form of thought does not commit me to a particular position within current debates in moral philosophy, the same goes for philosophical debates about moral education. The term 'public forms of thought' may indeed call to mind for certain readers Hirst's theory of the forms of knowledge, as I have already acknowledged, but it fits equally well with his later, recent, view about social practices (e.g. Hirst 1993, 1998); and the reference to language may call to mind some of the philosophical writings about moral education of say, R. M. Hare or John Wilson. It should already be clear that my general approach does not carry with it a commitment to particular views such as these.

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5 Hare, Rawls and Habermas are three of the best-known cases.

There is, however, one suggestion carried by phrases such as 'a public form of thought' or 'an area or form of discourse' which I do need explicitly to disclaim. It is carried more by the word 'a' than by anything else in the phrases. '*A* public form of thought' suggests that morality is a distinct compartment of human affairs. This may not be right. Perhaps we should be talking about a large set of forms of thought; perhaps whatever form of thought we might pick out under the term 'morality' will be found to overlap with other existing forms of thought. I do not want to align myself with the early Hirstian claim that moral understanding is a distinct form of knowledge; or, for instance, with Hare's early claim that there is such a thing as *the* language of morals (cf. Stout 1988 p. 60). I shall later argue that we can distinguish what some have called 'morality in the narrow sense' from the broader field of the ethical. It might turn out that morality in the narrow sense is something like a distinct form of public language (a distinct *discourse*, in one of the meanings of that term); but if so, that will not exhaust the forms of discourse which are in some sense moral or ethical. For the moment, in referring to morality as a public form of thought I do not mean to imply sharp boundaries or a lack of interpenetration between different areas of human thought.

So far, then, no reason has emerged for not treating morality, like science, as a public form of thought (so long as 'a' is not emphasised). Since my thesis is concerned with the public understanding of morality, it might appear that already I have established enough. A public form of thought cannot exist without understanding (as I have already said about science); so the public understanding of morality must already exist.[6] But in that case, what is going to be the subject-matter of this thesis?

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6 Even if we leave aside the possibility of tacit, non-linguistic understanding, the fact that the public discourse of morality involves language should be enough to establish that it must involve understanding - at some level - since human use of language depends on persons understanding the sounds they are uttering, at least as the normal case, where purely reactive parrot-fashion utterances are the exception.
That we can make some sort of sense of the notion of understanding here, even if we are not able adequately to articulate it, seems to be one of the points at issue in the debate over artificial intelligence and machine consciousness between John Searle and his opponents. I take it that Searle's Chinese room is

Some detailed comparisons

Here the comparison with science may be helpful again. From the fact that science, as a public form of thought, depends on intra- and interpersonal understanding, nothing directly follows about the extent to which the public understanding of science (where 'public' = 'the general public') is a reality. To assess how far the general public has an understanding of science we would need to make a number of distinctions, including at least the following:

(1) There is a distinction in type of understanding, on the dimension of theoretical/practical. Practising scientists can *do* their science; lay persons will in some cases be able to understand what is done without being able to do it themselves.

(2) There is a related distinction between verbal and non-verbal understanding. Though the focus in this thesis throughout will be on what is or can be verbalised, tacit, non-verbal understanding needs to be recognised also. In science this will include (in different ways in different branches of science) motor skills in manipulating equipment, and skills of judgement in interpreting evidence.

(3) There is the distinction between knowing (or accepting) that something is so, and understanding why it is so. Within any sphere of science, much at a given time will be taken as established; in effect, as 'fact', even though philosophically such claims can be questioned. What is taken as established fact can be used in further work, and the individual using it does not

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an example of a device which responds to language with language but without understanding. We could imagine a purpose built 'morality room' (or computer; perhaps even a hand-held 'personal moral organiser'). If the input to the room on a particular occasion consisted of the sentence: 'I am proposing to borrow money from my friend and shall promise to pay it back though I know I shall never be able to' and the response from the room were 'You ought not to do that' I would say that there is no genuine moral thinking going on here, because the device which receives the input and produces the output does not *understand* the terms used. I suppose some proponents of hard AI would differ; but nothing in the overall argument of this thesis turns on that point.

necessarily have to understand the basis on which it is established. Much of the understanding which lay persons have of science will be of this nature.

(4) There are distinctions between different spheres within science. Scientists have their specialisms. The situation of certain lay persons will be analogous. Even among informed intelligent general readers, some may have some grasp of the debates around quantum theory but little notion of evolutionary explanation, and vice versa.

(5) There is a distinction (again without a sharp boundary) between the understanding required to work within a field, or indeed to understand findings within that field; and the understanding of the nature of the whole enterprise. Most practising scientists are not philosophers of, historians of or sociologists of science; philosophers, historians and sociologists of science are not usually practitioners of science. Practising scientists do not necessarily have an overall view of the nature of science.

Cutting across all of these distinctions, there will be the general distinction in degree of understanding; there are always likely to be shades of difference between having a full understanding of X and having no understanding of X.

All of these distinctions feed into the attempt to distinguish between different publics. It remains true that we can distinguish between the body of scientists, among whom the 'public form of thought' which is science actually operates, and the general or lay public, who may or may not understand what is going on. But we can also see now that there is going to be room for more fine-grained distinctions. So the questions of how much understanding of science the general public has, and how much it needs, are clearly going to be complex ones to address. I am not going to address them any further in this thesis. But analogous questions can be raised about morality, and I see no reason in advance to

suppose that these are less complex. To begin with, let me see how far the same distinctions apply.

(1) The distinction between practical and theoretical understanding seems to apply to morality, but with a difference. We are likely to think that fewer people can do science than can have some scientific understanding; the practitioners are in the minority. In morality, perhaps it is the other way round; more or less everyone, we may think, can in some sense 'do' morality, think and act morally; theoretical understanding may be harder to come by. This difference may be partly accounted for by the next distinction.

Distinction (2), between verbal and non-verbal understanding, clearly applies in some sense to morality. Indeed it is a familiar theme in recent moral philosophy (anticipated by Aristotle) that the understanding involved in morality is not exhausted by the kind of articulated verbal understanding displayed in rehearsing rules or principles to oneself or in proposing solutions to moral dilemmas (cf. Blum 1994). Appraisal of a situation, empathy with another, and the practical wisdom exercised in seeing what is to be done, are often not verbally articulated. In the case of science, it is likely to be only the practitioners, not the lay persons, who have a non-verbal understanding of their subject-matter. In morality perhaps it is different. It may be that many people - ordinary moral agents - have practical moral capacities even though their ability to verbalise about these is limited.

However, we should not simply assume that this is so. How many people are strong on moral sensitivity and practical wisdom? Perhaps not all that many. In any case, part of the burden of this thesis will be that in contemporary conditions sensitivity and practical wisdom, however vital, are not all that is needed; there is a need for a more articulated understanding also.

Distinction (3) seems also to have an analogue. Corresponding to knowledge (or acceptance) of established scientific fact will be, presumably, knowledge (or acceptance) that, say, something is

wrong. Here the whole question of whether morality has the kind of objectivity that can permit talk of knowledge may seem to raise problems; however, for the purposes of this present comparison I think these need not detain us. What is taken to be established in science is not in principle beyond dispute; the distinction between taking something as so, and being able to say why it is so, remains. Similarly the distinction between taking it that murder is wrong, and being able to say why it is wrong. And, as with science, one can ask how far it is important to be able to say why something is so. If the lay person accepts that the universe started with a big bang, does she have to be able to give the evidence and reasoning behind this conclusion? Perhaps the answer is that for some purposes it may not matter, for others it may. We can ask a similar question in the moral sphere. Will it be all right, for instance, if the lay person accepts that she should tolerate other people of whose lifestyles she disapproves, without being able to say why? I am interested, among other things, in how much and what kind of understanding the general public needs of such matters.

Distinction (4) may at first sight seem not to apply. Some people think of morality as a seamless web. Yet it does seem possible to speak of different areas of morality: interpersonal morality; political morality; professional ethics, and so on. Perhaps someone who is accomplished in some areas is not necessarily accomplished in others.

Distinction (5) seems clearly to apply. People who can in some sense 'do' morality, or think and act morally, do not necessarily have an overview of the whole 'business' of morality. There are people who make morality a special object of study - philosophers in the West from Ancient Greece onwards, then theologians, and more recently in addition a variety of psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists. Such people may indeed have a degree and kind of understanding of morality which the general public does not have. (This does not, just by itself, imply that the degree and kind of understanding which the 'experts' have is more worth having; still less does it imply that the 'experts', even within the

terms of the language they themselves use, are morally better people.) As in the case of science, there is unlikely to be a sharp difference in understanding between those who study the nature of morality and everyone else. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which there are, if not moral experts, experts about morality - including people who have studied moral philosophy. That is why it makes sense to argue, for morality as for science, that understanding of the area is too important to be the preserve of the experts.

Enough understanding, but not too much?

Within science, we might reasonably expect that there would be *some* positive correlation between having the capacity to practise within some area of science, and having a synoptic overview of the nature of science as such: that it would tend to be that the people who are highly competent at working with scientific ideas (perhaps in a particular field) will also have a higher than average understanding of the nature of science. (Of course, there will be exceptions). In the case of morality, it is not clear that there will be such a correlation, and the idea is not infrequently encountered that the study of the nature of morality may be a corrupting influence on the practice of morality and the everyday practical kind of understanding of moral ideas which that practice involves (e.g. Baier, A. 1985 pp. 207 ff.). There is a possibility - to put it no more strongly at this stage - that too much reflection on the practice will undermine the practice itself. (This seems to have been part of what Nietzsche had in mind in the passage quoted in the Preface; a related point is made by Williams, 1985, Ch. 9).

Here is perhaps an important difference between the position of those who argue for PUS, and the position of those, like myself, who want to argue for PUM.[7] The advocates of PUS may well have confidence in the positive value of science, and confidence also that an increase in the public understanding of science will be good for science. One may be less confident that an increase in the public understanding of morality will be good for morality.

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[7] I very much favour PUS too, but I am not practically engaged in arguing for it.

Consider now a comparison between a certain kind of science education and a certain kind of moral education. On one view of science education, it is necessary for everyone to be introduced to a selection of what I have called above the 'established facts' of science. The selection of facts may be made on broadly instrumental terms, with a view perhaps to what is necessary for an understanding of contemporary society, and perhaps also to what is necessary if an individual is to function as an economic unit within that society. On this picture a deeper, and more reflective and critical, understanding of the nature of science itself will hardly be necessary for the majority of people. In fact it might even be counterproductive, as introducing a degree of scepticism about claims built on scientific expertise. Perhaps it is better that the majority of people, who are always likely to remain non-scientists, should take what scientists say on trust. (I shall label this the naive view of science education).

Most science educators (in my experience and reading, though that may not constitute a representative sample) would not subscribe to such a view. Nor would the advocates of PUS. If one is serious about education - indeed, if one is serious about understanding - one will accept that education and understanding bring with them the possibility of a reflective critical stance. Once there is reflection on the nature of science, then there will be room for alternative interpretations of it, and for debate between these. For instance, there are voices from within the sociology and history of science which might encourage a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of scientific claims, which may not be at all what most working scientists would endorse.

A campaign for the public understanding of science cannot realistically consist in the transmission, without challenge, of the understanding of science which is held by working scientists themselves - even if there is no disagreement among them. Once the attempt is made to equip a wider public for a reflective understanding of the nature of science, the debates about its nature cannot be closed off from that public. Presumably the

advocates of PUS think that this wider reflective and critical consciousness about science is welcome or, if not welcome, at least a price worth paying.

To summarise, the ends aimed at in the promotion of the public understanding of science are not so clear that they can be taken for granted, so that only means need be considered. In particular, there is the question of finding the balance between, on the one hand, promoting an understanding of the diversity of existing conceptions and views of science, with all the controversies around them, and, on the other hand, promoting one common understanding of science. And in so far as it is decided that one common understanding of science should be promoted, there is the question of what this understanding will be, how it will be arrived at, and what kind of authority will be claimed for it. Will it, for instance, be put across as indubitably the correct understanding of science, or as one simply fastened on for pragmatic reasons?

I do not, for my purposes, need to pursue these questions. But it is my contention that any proposal to promote the public understanding of *morality* would have to consider similar questions. Should education be seeking to promote an understanding of the existing diversity of views about morality? Should it as well - or instead - be trying to promote one common view of morality? If the latter, what view is this to be? These, roughly, are the questions I shall take up in this thesis.

Part I

Diversity, understanding and the search for common values

Part I emphasises the context of value-diversity in which thinking about moral education, and values education more generally, has to go on. I argue that it is important for education to promote understanding of this diversity, but I also ask whether there could at the same time be a shared understanding of morality. Referring to the SCAA Forum I show one way in which one might distinguish seeking a common morality from simply seeking common values.

Chapter One
Diversity of values

Diversity of values is something frequently referred to in discussions of education in contemporary society, but less often analysed. Yet it is not possible to go far in asking what form education should take in relation to values without considering this diversity. As a preliminary to all that will follow, I shall here take an overview of diversity of values, and begin to look at ways in which education has responded to it. I shall be concerned above all with cautioning against an over-simple conception of the nature of the diversity with which we have to deal.

One relevant kind of diversity is in terminology. For instance (to use an example which will become especially relevant as the argument proceeds) there is in educational discourse now considerable confusion around the terms 'moral education' and 'values education' (cf. *TAV* p.119). Sometimes they may be used interchangeably; sometimes they may be used with an acknowledgement, tacit or explicit, that 'values education' is the wider term, but also with a sense that moral education is central; but also sometimes the term 'values education' may be used without any sense that there is within it some more particular field of 'moral education' to be marked out.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the whole field of values is broader than the field of morality (which in turn may be understood in broader or narrower ways, as we shall see later). If we are focusing on diversity in values then part of the diversity is that there are different kinds of values, not all of which are in any way constitutive of morality; it is appropriate, then, to start with the term 'values' in this chapter. In any case, there are pragmatic reasons for starting with the language of values. One reason is just that the term 'values' is becoming increasingly common in educational discourse (as in the title of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, of which I shall have more to say later); it is unlikely now to go away. Another is that for certain practical purposes the very breadth and vagueness of

the term 'values' may be desirable; if, for instance, one wants to get people from diverse backgrounds talking to see if they can find common ground, one may do so with less appearance of prejudicing the outcome if one initially uses the language of 'values' rather than that of 'morality'. This remains true even if, as I shall argue later, morality is precisely what such a discussion is likely to converge on. There *is* a case for structuring a search for consensus around the notion of morality, but this needs to be a worked-out notion of what morality involves, not just the word.

Against an over-simple view of diversity

In considering diversity of values, perhaps the first and most important point to be made - which the rest of this chapter will be illustrating - is just that it is important not to oversimplify the phenomena. Under this heading there are several mistakes to be avoided: not only the possible conflation of values and morality, but also the ideas, for instance, that value-pluralism comes only with multiculturalism, or that it is always a matter of *different people* holding different values. Then also there is the thought that diversity of values is a matter only of diversity in the content of values, when in fact it also involves differences over the interpretation or significance of values. For instance, if two people hold incompatible values, this is a first-order instance of diversity. There may also be different interpretations of the diversity: for instance, one interpretation may have it that, of these two people holding incompatible values, one must be right and the other wrong; on another interpretation there may be no such distinction to be made. The situation is still more complex because the distinction between first-order phenomena and second-order interpretation is not clear-cut; interpretation already enters into the phenomena. When someone says 'this is good' or 'this is wrong', some understanding or other of what it is for something to be good or to be wrong is already entering tacitly into the thought that is articulated in these words.

Perhaps, though, the best starting-point for a discussion of diversity is the simple acknowledgment that values themselves are plural. We can see this, first, because we can speak of

different kinds of values; we may, for instance, distinguish moral values from economic values or aesthetic values, political values, prudential values or spiritual values. In this kind of classification, 'moral', 'aesthetic' and the like figure as adjectives; but a less mysterious way of understanding what is at issue here may be to treat these distinguishing terms as adverbial, as qualifying the way in which we value things. It is not only that there are different kinds of thing which we can value - works of art, human action, bodily and mental states, forms of social organisation - but that we can value things - even the same thing - in different ways. To see a work of art as beautiful, to see it as expressing something important about human nature, or to see it as a valuable investment, are different ways of valuing it.

The plurality, not just of values, but of kinds of value means that (even if a common human nature is assumed) there is room for one person to differ from another in the way they balance one value against another, and in which kinds of values they tend to be most concerned with. Equally, whole societies may tend to weight and balance various values in distinctive ways - and this is one of the ways in which one culture differs from another. So at this admittedly rather abstract level, people who speak of universal human values, and people who stress cultural differences in values, can both be right. Since there are some common factors in the nature of the human species and in human needs, vulnerabilities and tendencies - such as the need to eat, and vulnerability to physical injury, and perhaps something like a tendency to seek meaning in experience - it would be surprising if some common values had not come to be recognised (cf., e.g., Hampshire 1983, Nussbaum 1993). But equally, the world of possible values - the whole range of things that can matter to human beings - is so large and complex that it would be surprising if different cultures, stressing and weighting values in different ways, had not developed. And this is without yet mentioning the different ways of interpreting the nature of values, where again one kind of interpretation (e.g. a religiously-based one) may be predominant in one culture, another in another.

In attempting to understand diversity we need constantly to move back and forth between recognising commonalities and recognising the scope for diversity on the basis of the commonalities. Thus, within all the diversity of kinds of values, most if not all cultures will make some kind of distinction between moral values and other kinds of values. But they will not all draw the lines in the same places - Western liberal secular cultures, for instance, have gone further than most in drawing lines between morality and religion, between morality and law, between morality and politics. So anyone who has their own way of drawing the lines - even if to them it seems obvious - runs the risk of insensitivity to others who do not draw them in the same way. Related to this is the fact that, even if people are in the habit of thinking of morality as a relatively distinct area, there is room for different interpretations of what makes a consideration a moral one - of what it is for something to matter morally.

Consider the following ideas. Moral values are ideals about how every person should live his or her life; they are aspirations for every individual, regardless of whether others are or are not living up to these same ideals, but by the same token we should not worry too much if we do not live up to them. Or, moral values are constraints on what each of us in society is allowed to do, and their point is that we should not unduly interfere with each other; these minimal constraints - not killing or injuring each other, not breaking contracts, and so on - are not too difficult to live up to, and provided we respect them, we are each of us free to live in whatever way we like. Or, moral values are whatever values anyone takes to be most central and most important in his or her own life - hence my moral values may be quite different from yours, but we should each of us strive to live according to our own moral values. Or, moral values are universal truths about what is required if human life is to go well. Or, moral values correspond to the commands of an omniscient and omnipotent deity, and it is not for mere mortals to ask the reason for them. In a society like Britain at the turn of the twenty-first century, none of these ideas is entirely unfamiliar. But they are by no means all compatible with each other.

It would not be an exaggeration to say, in Britain at the turn of the twenty-first century, that as a society we are confused about morality. We are not sure what kind of phenomenon it is; we are not even sure whether we want it or not. Perhaps as a response to perceived diversity, there is a tendency towards what we might call the 'personalisation' of morality (though the term 'relativism' is often, misleadingly, used); this is the idea that morality in the end comes down to individual choice or how the individual feels about it. Yet at the same time there are appeals to moral considerations within public discourse which assume some sort of public agreement. Thus during 1999 the British Prime Minister has made explicit use of moral language (including the word 'moral') in relation to the Kosovo war and also in relation to the attempt to end poverty in Britain; in the latter context he called for a shared moral purpose for Britain. But he also used very similar language in response to news reports of pregnancies of twelve-year old girls - which is just the kind of case in which many people think that what they would call 'moralising', or 'being judgmental' is the last thing that will improve the situation.

Any explicit appeal to morality in public discourse seems to presuppose that there is something objective[1] or at least interpersonally agreed to be appealed to: something like, metaphorically speaking, a framework or grid to which people are expected to conform. But this is at the same time an idea which people may react against. Particularly when the moral claims made concern something as intimate as sexual behaviour, they can easily be construed as attempts to impose or repress. Then some people become suspicious of the very idea of morality. Standish in *TRAW* puts the point this way:

'For many the very word 'morality' has become tainted, suggesting the stiff correctness of Victorian behaviour, sexual repression (if not hang-ups), timid subjection to conformity, and a certain

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[1] I use the term informally. I agree with R. M. Hare (1981) that the terms 'objective' and 'subjective' have led to much confusion in the context of morality. I said something about these terms in *TAV* pp. 35-37.

starchiness of tone..... People *do* avoid speaking of morality - as if something were amiss with it, as with an outmoded ceremony.' (*TRAW* p. 50; see also *TAV* pp. 61 ff.; Hare 1992).[2]

Confusion and scepticism about morality puts teachers (who are not professionally immune from confusion and scepticism in the wider society) in a difficult position. It would be possible to argue that the professional response should be to avoid talking about morality. It is already the case that the term 'moral education', though still common in academic discourse, does not figure largely in teachers' own discourse about their role. Especially in the light of recent official documentation, teachers will be using categories such as 'PSHE' and 'Citizenship education', and within these categories they are very likely to talk about 'values'; but they might manage largely to avoid talking about morality.

There is indeed something to be said for this strategy, and it is not without support within the academic literature. One could, for instance, read John White's (1990) arguments, influenced by Williams (1985), for going 'beyond moral education' to the cultivation of altruistic dispositions, as supporting the playing-down of morality. The same could be said for much of the literature within philosophy of education which has been influenced by virtue ethics and the ethics of care. Neverthless, I shall reject the strategy of ignoring morality in education (and hoping that it, or at any rate confusion and worries about it, will go away). There are at least two reasons for rejecting this strategy. One is that, despite the conflicting tendencies in the wider society, talk of morality is unlikely actually to go away; in which case education, I would claim, has some responsibility to

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2 Very different attitudes to morality can co-exist even within a purely secular society. The fact that moral values are for some people intimately tied up with religious ones introduces a further dimension of diversity. It is one that I consider important, and which I have given some attention to in *TAV* and in Haydon (1999c). It does not figure largely in the arguments of this thesis. However, it is important to my arguments here that religious believers should be able to recognise the relevance - even if in their view not the centrality - to morality of questions about harm and benefit within society which can also be addressed in secular terms. Otherwise there would not be the possibility of convergance on what I shall call 'morality in the narrow sense'.

address the matter and to prepare students for the confused situation they will find. Another is that I think there is good reason for trying to maintain and reinforce morality, at least when it is understood in a certain way, and that education has an important role to play in its maintenance and reinforcement.

This, though, is to anticipate later arguments. So far I have given no argument for any one way of narrowing down the whole field of values to a focus on any particular conception of morality. And it would still be premature to do that, because within my overall argument, as well as arguing for just such a focus, I also want to stress the importance of an understanding of the diversity across the wider field. So for the moment I shall return to diversity of values in general.

Responses to diversity

It is possible to view the fact of diversity itself in either a positive or negative light. It can be seen positively as a valued part of the richness of human life; or negatively as a source of conflict (and these two views are not incompatible). The balance of views held by a person may depend in part on how far that person sees a prospect of some common ground being found within the diversity. It will be, I think, fairly widely acknowledged that some sort of common ground of values is needed in human life, at least within one society. Pessimists may see diversity in itself as ruling out any common ground; others may see an understanding of the diversity precisely as the first step towards finding the common ground.

Much of the later discussion in this thesis will be about the nature of possible common ground. Here I shall distinguish two broad ways in which it is possible to see the task of seeking a common ground. We may see the task as seeking to find, to recognise, or to recover some deep truth about the way that human nature or rationality works[3]; or we may see the task as a pragmatic one of making accommodations at a quite superficial level to deep

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3 'Human nature or rationality': in academic terms, of course, the first is roughly the Humean route, the second the Kantian.

underlying differences. These different views of the task correspond in turn to different ways of seeing the phenomena of diversity: as superficial, or as running deep.

There is one way of thinking, with roots both in religious and in scientific thought, which says that the differences between people are of little significance. What people have in common is much more important than the differences between them. We are all created equal (for Christians, because we are created in God's image); if we are scratched, we all bleed (Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*); we are all capable of rational thought (Enlightenment thinking, above all in Kant); and we share with each other (and with chimpanzees too) all but a tiny fraction of our DNA (modern evolutionary biology). With all this in common, the ways in which we differ from each other must be only superficial. If we were cakes, we would all be made of the same ingredients to the same recipe; only the icing on the top would come in different patterns.

But there is another way of thinking which effectively turns this upside down. It is true that there are commonalities in a biological sense, and that what differs is only our interpretations of our living and the values we put on things; but this does not mean that the differences are trivial. To the contrary, it is in our interpretations that we live our lives. The commonalities across human lives are, precisely, the features of biological life which we share with other animals, and in that way they are not, from a human perspective, what is important. What matters to us is the world of human meaning, and that does not come all of a piece; it always, necessarily, comes in some particular form - we speak a particular language, are born in a particular part of the world, and so on. Of course the basic facts of biology are significant to us - but the point is that the significance is not a biological given. It is always an interpretation, and interpretations differ. Other animals are born and eat and copulate and die, and so do we; but other animals just do these things without (so far as we can tell) interpreting them; whereas we weave complex structures of meaning and interpretation around the events of our lives. And

since, in our life as we experience it, nothing is deeper than these interpretations (since it is within these structures of interpretation that we sometimes find thoughts and experiences 'deep' or 'profound'), so we have to say that the differences in these interpretations are deep differences. (All the cakes are basically made of flour; but there are so many other varying ingredients, and so many different recipes, that the fact that they are all made of flour seems merely trivial).[4]

A related point, important for current educational debate,[5] is that what matters to us - to each of us individually - is our identity, and that our identity is constituted by things which we may have in common with *certain* others, but rarely by what we have in common with everyone. It may be part of my identity that I was born in England, am male, am an academic, and so on, but that I am human or that I need to eat to survive, is hardly part of my identity. From a scientific perspective my being human - or indeed being mammalian, or being vertebrate - must be the foundation of all the rest, but so far as my identity is concerned, it is likely to be part of the background that is simply taken for granted.

Similar points apply to values that are shared and values that differentiate people. It is not surprising, for instance, that for all human beings being killed is generally something to be avoided, and hence it is not surprising that the idea that 'killing is wrong' is a very generally shared moral value. But the belief that killing is wrong is unlikely to be experienced as a part of someone's

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[4] On the issues in this paragraph cf. Gray (1995). Gray, interpreting Berlin, argues that for the Enlightenment, 'cultural difference was not of the essence of humanity, but something ephemeral, or at least evanescent, a phase in human development, not constitutive of humanity itself.' (p.107) In contrast, he argues:

'In this real world, individuals are constituted by their particularities, what is most essentially constitutive of them is what is most contingent and accidental - their place and time of birth, their first language and family lineage, the cultural tradition by which they are formed and whose power over them is confirmed in the very act of rebellion against it.' (pp. 107-8)

[5] It bears particularly on the debate over the desirability of culturally mixed schools in a plural society, as against culturally distinct schools for different cultural groups.

identity, unless it plays a particularly prominent role in someone's beliefs - if, for instance, she is a pacifist. Being a pacifist is something that sets a person apart from many others, and may create a common bond with certain others who do share the position; so it is quite intelligible that being a pacifist might come to be counted - by herself or by others - as part of a person's identity.

Again, while we do not find that some cultures are distinguished by their thinking that killing is wrong while others hold no such belief,[6] we do find that different cultures contain different ways in which the positive value of life and the negative value of death are woven into wider interpretations; in the context, for instance, of religious beliefs about service to God and the attainment of happiness in an afterlife, death can take on a very positive significance.[7] There is a profundity here in meanings which are not shared by everyone; the mere biological fact of mortality, which we share not only with each other but with all animals, may seem trivial by comparison. On the other hand, for much of secular, post-Enlightenment thinking, there is nothing more profound than suffering and the fact of death; and structures of values such as equality and the right to life are built on just these common factors.

So the different ways of looking at diversity, seeing it either as superficial or as deep, apply to differences in values as much as to any other differences. On one view, differences in the values people hold are superficial variations on the surface of a deeper truth, which is that there are universal and rational values applying to all. Politically, this view fits with an emphasis on human rights, universal and equal for all, as a bedrock. On the other view, values go deep in people's psyche - we all see the world through our values, but these are not the same values for

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6 Once we insert the X in 'killing X is wrong' then there are some notable variations. Consider Jains at one end of the spectrum, and at the other the headhunters described by von Furer-Haimendorf (1967).

7 I am grateful to Steve Bramall for his arguments, *contra* Nussbaum(1993), that death is *not* a common factor in the human condition.

all - and so, by inversion, the 'universal' values, such as equality and human rights, are at best a pragmatic fiction which we can attempt to maintain for the sake of an uneasy coexistence. On this second view, the politics of equal rights does not constitute a sufficient recognition of the value of every person, precisely because it does not recognise the importance of the differences which go deep into people's identity; we need in addition a 'politics of difference' (Young 1990) or 'politics of recognition' (Gutmann 1992).

So there are conflicting interpretations of the undeniable phenomena both of perceived commonality and of perceived difference. Faced with two such different interpretations as these, we may wish to ask which is right. But the question may itself be mistaken. There need not even be any disagreement on 'the facts' between one who sees the commonalities as deep and one who sees the differences as deep; they can both agree on what is common and what is different. They are looking at the same facts from different perspectives.

Yet it may be thought that in the context of education we have to decide between these interpretations, because they would appear to have different practical implications. On the first view, it would be a task of education to enable everyone to see the deep truth about the universality of certain facts about the human condition, and hence of certain values which are important for human life; in the face of these, actual variations in beliefs and values will seem trivial, and it would be wrong to put too much weight on them. On the second view, it will be a task of education to be sure that the differences which run deep in people's lives are recognised and respected; to promote one particular set of values would be to ride insensitively over the beliefs of many while seeking to impose the values of a few.

But further reflection may suggest that this contrast is overdrawn. The first view, even as it does seek to promote common values, cannot neglect the fact that differences exist, because among the common values that it is necessary to promote will be

understanding and tolerance and respect for the differences. And the second view does not mean that nothing that is common should be taught, because even if we do not think there are deep truths in common, we still need, if only for pragmatic reasons, to promote some common language, some common way of living together. Either way, then, there is reason to think that education has to deal with both diversity and commonality.[8]

Education and diversity

In what way has education in Britain in the late twentieth century in fact approached matters of the diversity of values? A short answer might be: 'with a good deal of confusion, and certainly with no overall coherent view'. It is not very helpful, for instance, that the idea of diversity of values is in many minds associated with multiculturalism.[9] It is also not very helpful that values are often seen in education as the preserve either of religious education or of PSHE; for both these parts or aspects of the curriculum, as they have actually often been practised,[10] may put a particular slant on the approach which is taken to values. Linking a concern with values too much with religion in an educational context may give too much weight to what is only one way of interpreting values within the overall diversity, and it may thus give the impression that values are to be taken less seriously outside of a religious context. PSHE in practice has often put a lot of weight on the individual's choice of values, but in doing this it may tend to suggest that individual choice is the only viable response to diversity, thus playing down the possibility of finding

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8 This conclusion holds good, I think, at a sufficient level of generality; but it still allows the question referred to in note 5 above to be controversial. Culturally mixed schools, and separate schools, may both be advocated as ways in which a society's educational provision can 'deal with both diversity and commonality'. I would argue, however, that any individual's education, whether it takes place in a mixed or a separate school, cannot be adequate if it does not enable that individual to 'deal with both diversity and commonality'.

9 The paper from which this chapter is partially drawn (Haydon 1999c) was perhaps concerned most of all, in the context of a volume on 'Education, Values and Diversity', to make the point that diversity in values is not to be equated with plurality of cultures. Cf. also *TAV* p. 109.

10 In neither case is the bias mentioned in any way inherent in the particular curriculum area; so this is not a criticism of PSHE, or of RE, as such.

common ground.[11] Again, if values are seen as particularly the preserve of one or other or both of these two areas, the impression may be left that values do not come into other areas. This may lead to a tendency to overlook aesthetic values (cf. *TAV* p.119) as well as all the other ways in which values can enter into any part of the curriculum.

Against this background, it should perhaps be seen, in a long term perspective, as a move in the right direction that legislation in 1992 forced schools to try to take an overview of their concern with pupils' values. It did this in a particular way which certainly raised problems of its own, which teachers have been grappling with since. Following and supplementing the ERA of 1988, the 1992 Education Act laid on OFSTED the duty to inspect the provision which schools made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of their pupils. A number of documents were quick to note that what held these various areas of development together was the directness of their concern with values. It was not that the traditional academic concerns of the curriculum, as well as physical education, did not have anything to do with values (cf. *TRAW* 140). But there was a perception that while pupils' mental and physical development was being addressed by certain recognised aspects of the curriculum, there were important concerns about values which the established parts of the curriculum were not in fact reaching.

Some people have had problems with the notion of development in this context. In my view, this bit of terminology is not nearly as problematic as some others. The term 'development' is often used in ordinary language to mean little more than 'a change for the better'.[12] Even if we are quite unclear what is intended by the

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11 Smith and Standish write in the context of the SCAA Forum on Values: 'Talk of 'values'... plays into the hands of instinctive subjectivists (so often called 'relativists') since 'values' have the air of something personal to the individual.' (*TRAW* p. 141) It is not clear that this connotation is written into the meaning of the word 'values', but it may well have been encouraged by the actual practice of PSHE in Britain (and 'values clarification' in the USA) in recent years.

12 There is also an evaluatively neutral sense of the term; teachers could take note of the development of a laddish culture among their male students without at all approving of it. Or to take an example which I

term 'spiritual', we know that 'spiritual development' is intended to denote some sort of change towards a better state.

We might ask whether just any kind of change for the better can be counted as development. Perhaps the change has to be seen as gradual and cumulative, while some theoretical accounts would write in further restrictions. But there is no need for conceptual legislation here. It *is* possible to refer to any kind of change (except possibly very sudden change) as development if you (the speaker) consider it to be an improvement; and this must be at least the starting point for discussion in educational contexts of what would constitute moral or spiritual development

Since education can hardly not be concerned to bring about, or at least open the way for, changes for the better, then if education is to be concerned with the 'moral, spiritual, social and cultural' at all, it will rightly be concerned with development (in at least a loose sense) in these areas. The term 'development' also helps to guard against the simplistic idea, often to be found in some sections of the media, that the task for schools so far as values are concerned is simply one of inculcation, since the idea of development in an educational context can readily accommodate ideas of coming to appreciate, coming to understand, coming gradually to have a clearer, broader, deeper, view.

The more important question is about the categorisation of forms of development. Given the vast diversity of values, which I have tried at least to indicate above, some sort of categorisation seems unavoidable for practical purposes. A school which claimed to be concerned with values and backed this up just by claiming to teach pupils the value of money and the value of exam results could hardly claim to be recognising the whole range of important values. A categorisation gives reminders to the school that make it more difficult to overlook certain important kinds of value, and it can in practice help a school to formulate an approach and to keep track of what it is doing. The legislation, through OFSTED, is

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shall mention in the Epilogue, a sociologist would normally be making no evaluation in speaking of secularisation as one aspect of the development of many modern societies.

in effect saying: in so far as the school is concerned with pupils' development in relation to values, it should not omit any of these categories.

This leaves the question: was this the best set of categories? It is clearly not the only possible categorisation. Nor is it clear where it came from. I have not seen in any of the official or semi-official documentation an explanation as to why the four categories of spiritual, moral, social and cultural were chosen; the fact that the category 'social' was only added in the 1992 legislation, while the other three appear (along with 'mental' and 'physical') in the 1988 Act, also suggests that there was not from the beginning any clear policy behind the categorisation.

There are other categories that could have been included. Aesthetic development does not figure, though from the QCA guidance on SMSC development[13] it appears that this is to be covered by 'cultural development'. Perhaps more significantly, 'emotional' (or affective) development does not appear. Some of the attempts to make sense of the problematic category of spiritual development seem to have been trying to take account of the emotions; but development of the emotions has also often been seen to be part of moral development. The term 'religious development' would certainly have provoked many objections, but might have had the merit of a clearer focus than 'spiritual development'; it might even have been possible to argue that religious development, unlike the others, should be seen as optional. Then it might have been possible to absorb everything which various people want to put under spiritual development into one of the other forms of development without remainder. And so on.

That paragraph was meant only to illustrate that the modern quadrivium of SMSC is by no means obviously the best categorisation. The fact remains, however, that any categorisation can at least function as a reminder not to lump all values together

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13 This documentation was sent to a number of schools (and to interested individuals) as part of a pilot study beginning in Autumn 1997, and intended to last for two years.

into one basket. To that extent any categorisation is an acknowledgement of diversity among values; that is, of the intrapersonal diversity that can exist within any one individual. The categorisation does not by itself imply anything about interpersonal diversity, except that the scope for interpersonal variation will be very great, since there is no reason in advance to suppose that any of the categories picked out will be immune to interpersonal variation.

In principle, then, a search for common values could result in a set of values, held in common, which cut across the categories of spiritual, moral, social, cultural - and for that matter affective, aesthetic, or whatever. Nevertheless, I want to argue that a search for common values, as often conceived, is in effect a search for common moral values. I shall not, however, pursue that argument until Chapter 3, where I shall discuss in particular the work (in which I was personally involved) of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community, set up by SCAA in 1996. First, in the next chapter, I want to take up a wider issue which is of importance for education. Even supposing that there can be agreement on some common set of values, does that mean that education can neglect values which are not held in common; or is it important for education to promote knowledge and understanding of values in all their diversity?

Chapter Two
Why promote understanding of diversity?

In the last chapter I drew attention to the diversity of values, even speaking intrapersonally. For a full picture of the diversity of values we have to add the interpersonal diversity which cuts across the intrapersonal. If education has to try to promote in everyone an understanding of this diversity in all its aspects, that is a daunting challenge.

But is it a challenge that education has to face? There have from time to time been suggestions that what education above all needs to do is to promote adherence to certain values which can be, or which are in fact, held in common. In the bulk of this thesis I shall be supporting something which, while not exactly that view, will sound something like it. If I were to do nothing but this, I would risk suggesting to the reader that I think the promotion of some common set of values is sufficient; that if education can do this, it can leave the interpersonal diversity outside of that common set of values to look after itself.

In fact I do not think this; I believe that in addition to promoting a common understanding, education does need to try to promote understanding of the diversity and complexity of values. In this chapter I shall explain why.

Possibly to philosophers of education it will seem obvious that education should be casting its net wide as regards the understanding it is trying to promote. But this is unlikely to seem obvious to everyone in a plural society. For instance, parents who have tried their best to instil in their children the values which they believe to be right may be suspicious of an education which goes out of its way both to show their children that there are many people who don't share these values, and to show them that there is something to be said for the other people's point of view.

Now suppose that we can find some set of common values which everyone is happy to see the schools promoting. Would it not be a

sensible strategy to stick to doing that, and to leave everything in the field of values on which people don't agree as a private matter which is not the concern of schools?

I shall argue that this is not a good strategy. My argument will begin from a comparison between my question about values education and certain questions recently much debated within political philosophy. Both my question and the questions in political philosophy arise in the context of a society which is heterogeneous in its beliefs and values.

There is a strong strand in recent liberal political philosophy which holds, roughly speaking, that common membership of a liberal state, sharing in a common political system, is possible only to the extent that the functioning of the system abstracts from the differences within the population. In contrast to some earlier liberal theories, more recent ones have tended to assume a smaller area of genuine agreement in beliefs and values. Where once, for instance, advocates of religious toleration still saw atheism as beyond the pale, for modern liberalism the political system does not need to and should not assume either theism or atheism. For Rawls (1993), both theism and atheism would be part of different *comprehensive* doctrines; political liberalism is not a comprehensive doctrine, but is that set of principles, of an explicitly political sort, on which different comprehensive views can converge. This 'overlapping consensus' will be philosophically minimalist, since it will not include shared metaphysical or theological underpinnings; the idea is, rather, that the agreed principles may be supported on different grounds from within different traditions.

Some other modern accounts explicitly see the principles of political liberalism as nothing but a *modus vivendi* (Larmore 1987), an accommodation for practical purposes which its adherents 'go along with' rather than 'believe in'; here acceptance of the agreed principles need not even be motivated by anything within the comprehensive doctrine of each adherent. While in certain contexts the difference between the overlapping consensus

and the *modus vivendi* views may be significant, they converge in that on either view actual progress in practical contexts (e.g. in the formulation and implementation of policies for citizenship education) depends on a consensus actually being found to exist 'on the ground'. For most of my argument below I shall refer to all such approaches as 'empirical consensus' approaches.

It is important to see how different the *empirical consensus* view is from many earlier philosophical theories of the state, which in a variety of ways tried to lay down the correct principles for human beings as social/political animals. Such theories could be comprehensive in Rawls's sense; they did have their deep underpinnings, metaphysical, theological or whatever; and by implication those who did not share the same metaphysical or theological premises were mistaken. I shall refer to such theories collectively as 'authoritative answer' views. An 'authoritative answer' view need not be non-liberal. On the contrary, some liberals have argued that liberalism is the authoritative answer (thus espousing what Rawls calls 'comprehensive liberalism' in contrast to 'political liberalism'). However, what many modern liberals are doing is saying that the underlying philosophical debates, the search for the authoritative answer, should not be part of the public sphere at all. They do not, of course, mean that these things should not be talked about and argued over; but they do mean that such debates are not to be treated as relevant to the choice and implementation of the guiding principles of the society at the political level (cf. Benhabib 1992 Ch. 3).

To a certain extent there is an analogy between these two kinds of defence of liberalism, and two approaches to values education. Aligning with the authoritative answer view is the idea that values education above all should be education in the right values (which we could call the authoritative answer view of values education). This is a view, of course, which can only be put into practice by those who believe they know what the right values are. This means already that the authoritative answer view faces problems in a context of diversity. Not only is there not unanimity on what the right values are, but there is disagreement

on what it means to call certain values the right ones, and on what kind of enquiry - philosophical, theological, or even anthropological or biological - is relevant to establishing any such claim.

An alternative is a strategy which aligns with the empirical consensus approach to liberalism. That is, that people should get together to discover where they do in fact have agreement on values; one should stress 'in fact' because the point is to find values on which people can agree at the level of content. Whatever these agreed values turn out to be, these will form at least the core of values education. This I shall call the empirical consensus view of values education.

Attention to such a view has from time to time crystallised around some particular event or publication. Thus in the mid-eighties the Swann Report (DES 1985) called for a recognition of plurality within 'a common framework of values'.[1] Up until the time when I wrote the article from which parts of this chapter are drawn, there had not been any systematic attempt actually to draw up a common list of values for educational purposes. I was, then, speculating when I wrote in 1995

'it is not unrealistic to expect that a workable level of agreement could be found, *so long as the values in question are characterised rather broadly.* One would imagine, for instance, that a list of agreed values would contain such items as 'respect for persons' and 'toleration of religious differences'. Whether the cross-cultural agreement would survive the effort of cashing out such ideas in the detail necessary if more than lip service is to be paid to them is a further question.' (Haydon 1995 p. 56)

Since I first wrote that paragraph, an exercise has been carried out which was in many ways an attempted implementation of the empirical consensus strategy. I refer to the work initiated by SCAA in 1996, including the SCAA Forum on Values (see

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1 I and a number of colleagues discussed this call in Haydon (1987a); I shall refer briefly below to the position I then took. As mentioned in the Preface (n. 1), I would not now endorse everything in my own contribution to that volume.

Appendices 2 and 3). That Forum did come up with a list of agreed values, and two of the items on that list were 'we should respect others, including children' and 'we should respect religious and cultural diversity'. I shall have more to say below, especially in the next chapter, about the SCAA approach; for the moment it is worth noting that both Swann and SCAA, in referring to what needs to be held in common, use the terminology 'values', not 'morality'.

Before returning to that point in the next chapter I shall continue my argument from the 1995 article, because I still want to argue, as I did then, that even if the approach through shared values found empirically is successful in its own aims, there is also a need for an education which will not rest content with consensus, but will deliberately seek an awareness and understanding of differences.

An important feature of the empirical consensus approach, without which it would not be a realistic aim at all, is that while different groups might agree on what is to be put on the list, they will not necessarily agree on the underlying reasons for the values included (a point common to both the overlapping consensus and the *modus vivendi* views).[2] Take, for instance, two responses to the idea in the Swann Report that Britain ought to be a pluralistic society in which diversity flourishes within a framework of shared values. Where is such a framework of shared values to come from? In Haydon (1987b) I myself argued for what I would now call a version of the empirical consensus approach, allowing scope for compromise and negotiation in the process of arriving at a consensus. This pragmatic approach aligns with the *modus vivendi* view. A British Muslim, in his own response to Swann, said

'multi-culturalism must rest on an affirmation of shared moral certainties: it cannot just be about differences. We have a lot in common and must work to bring this out .... the emphasis on

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2 A similar point is made in the Preamble to the SCAA Forum Statement of Values: 'Agreement on the values outlined below is compatible with disagreement on their sources' - a point to which I shall return.

common values .... needs far more emphasis than it has received hitherto' (Modood 1992, p. 4).

Modood's use of the phrase 'shared moral certainties' shows that his is not a *modus vivendi* approach. For Modood, I think, we would agree on certain values because they are moral certainties; and he must consider that different traditions (including at least Christianity and Islam) can licence the certainty. So this seems to be a version of the overlapping consensus view. My own approach, rooted in a more sceptical philosophical tradition, was not certain that there are moral certainties, but it would hold that if we can agree, even without claims of certainty, that is enough to be going on with.

For practical purposes, though, the two responses to Swann seem to converge, since both would hold that 'we must work to bring [the consensus] out'. A difference over the status of particular values - as certainties or as practical accommodations - is itself a philosophical or theological difference which need not stand in the way of the empirical consensus strategy.

If there is a possibility that the empirical consensus strategy can work, I think there must be a strong motivation to do one's best to put it into practice and leave it at that. Let values education be an initiation into agreed values, it might be said, and let us be careful to guard against the cognitively richer kind of education that, in the name of understanding, autonomy and reflection, would make people all the more aware of the differences between them in terms not only of the content of values but also of their significance. It is, as I pointed out in the last chapter, part of the pluralism of our society that people differ about the significance of their values: whether they are purely secular responses to the mundane problems of living, whether they are God-given commands, and so on. Even though an agreement on central values in terms of content may be possible, it is much less likely that there would spontaneously be agreement on the underlying nature and grounds of values in general, or of some class of values labelled 'moral'. In this case (the argument might continue) to introduce people to the fact that there is such variety at this level

is to risk inducing doubt, scepticism and weakened motivation even in those who - apart from their schooling - have been brought up in a coherent tradition. Viewed in this light, an education for knowledge and understanding about values and their diversity can seem a Pandora's box which for the sake of peaceful co-existence we had better not open.

Most of this thesis will be about convergence on a shared understanding of morality. Nevertheless, I think that within education we have to open Pandora's box, for at least two reasons. One is that a consensus which contingently happens to exist, or to be brought out, at a particular time, is not necessarily a basis for moral education or citizenship education at all. I shall be arguing that we do need some articulated basis of agreement, and that a particular understanding of morality should be able to provide that basis. In fact, a shared understanding of the nature of morality will in a sense be more important than an agreement on its content. So we cannot exclude questions about the nature of morality from education.

My second reason for believing we have to open Pandora's box is the one to which the rest of this chapter will be devoted. I do not align myself with that version of the empirical consensus view which would hold that all matters of values outside of an empirical consensus should not be the concern of public education at all. That strategy would, on the face of it, make the task of educators easier; it would be saying to teachers 'any values on which there is not consensus - and any questions about the nature of values and so on on which there is not consensus - are not your concern (they can be left to families, churches, and so on). Your task is just to transmit the values on which we all agree.' I shall try to show why this will not do.

Why not just empirical consensus?

A first move, which I mention only to go beyond it, is the liberal claim that values education conceived as initiation into common values would be a misnomer, because this would not be education at all but at best inculcation, at worst indoctrination. Education, it

may be said, must involve understanding, thinking for oneself, critical reflection. I do not want to put weight on this move because it is possible for people to say 'So far as values are concerned, education is not after all what we want; the priority is that people across society should come to hold and share the right sort of values'. In the face of that claim, it will avail liberals nothing to invoke ideas like 'autonomy' or 'indoctrination' as if they settled the issue. For these are themselves values which are not universally shared. If it is said that education must above all aim at autonomy and avoid indoctrination, this may be no more than another version of the authoritative answer view.

A defence of the role of autonomy and the avoidance of indoctrination within schooling in a plural society will need to be made in some way that can carry weight for adherents of different comprehensive doctrines. I suspect that at some sufficiently general level it might be possible to achieve agreement across traditions that critical reflection does have value (i.e. at a level of sufficient abstraction there might be an 'overlapping consensus' on the value of critical reflection). From this it might be possible to mount an argument for the conclusion that inculcation without critical reflection must always and everywhere be rejected. It is doubtful, however, whether such an argument at the level of a general and universal principle would go through. We can expect that those who wish to reject critical reflection (or too much critical reflection) on matters of values will make a more nuanced response. They do not have to resist critical thinking *per se*, but only in this area. That does not appear to be an incoherent position. For instance, the scientific and mathematical achievements of the Islamic world are evidence for the compatibility of critical thought on some matters with faith on others. (I do not want to be read here as suggesting that science and religion are in separate compartments; that would be a modernist liberal view and, if my understanding is correct, alien to the Islamic worldview, which rather sees such exercises of human thought as science and mathematics as going on within an over-arching framework which is not itself to be subjected to the

same kind of scrutiny that might be appropriate within the subordinate activities.)

What is needed, to establish a case for the promotion of understanding and critical reflection about values in a plural society, is a more pragmatic argument. This argument will not claim that the pursuit of knowledge, understanding and critical reflection over a broad front is an essential condition either of a good life *sans phrase*, or of a morally good life (to use a distinction which may not itself be available in all traditions). We need not dispute that there can be a good life, and that moral goodness can be realised within it, without critical reflection. We certainly cannot argue that critical reflection in itself makes people morally better. What we can do is ask in what kind of social context an unreflective life and the goodness that could be realised in it is possible (cf. the arguments for autonomy offered by Raz 1986, p. 391, and White 1990 pp. 103-4).

An unreflective good life is more likely to be possible in a society which is relatively homogeneous (so that there is less sense of alternatives), tradition-directed (so that there is less often any doubt about what is to be done) and socially and politically hierarchical (so that there are for most individuals fewer choices that have to be made on their on responsibility). In so far as a modern plural democracy differs from this pattern, the need for understanding and reflection is the greater. The argument can be spelled out by looking in turn at the implications of a society's being (or trying to be) democratic and of its being plural rather than homogeneous in its beliefs and values.

Whether it is, out of any particular historical context, always better that a society be democratic is not to the point here. Views about the ideal society are among the matters on which cultural groups may legitimately differ. In so far as a society is democratic any cultural group has reason for participating in democratic processes, on pain of their voice, and hence their values and

interests, being passed over in the public forum.[3] If a cultural group is to have a voice in democratic processes, this can only be through individual members of it having and exercising a voice. It is true that even within a one-person one-vote system the influence of a minority group, at a national level, does not depend on individual members of that group exercising their vote autonomously; for one can imagine authoritative leaders within a minority group telling its members how to vote; the group as a whole would then have a voice proportional to its numerical strength. However, in so far as democracy is a matter not just of voting, but of arguing, campaigning, being on committees and so on - much of which goes on at local level - the voice of a minority community is likely to be the stronger, the more its individual members are able to exercise their own capacities within the system.

Such an argument does not show that it is impossible for an individual to realise a good life within a more complex society without engagement in the public life of reflection and discussion. For a given individual may in effect withdraw from, or never become involved in, the political life of the society. But for at least two reasons such a life can hardly be a model for all members of any but very exceptional communities within a plural society. First, it cannot be acceptable to any culture which sees participation in the wider society as a moral duty in itself. If that is a moral duty in a democratic society (even if in others it might not be), then the demands on a good life in a democratic society are to that extent different. Secondly, although some members of a given cultural tradition may live a life of withdrawal (in the way, for instance, that in most religions there are monastic communities or the equivalent), the viability of such a form of life in a complex society is to some degree dependent on its being supported or at least tolerated within the wider moral culture of the society; and support or toleration within the public moral culture may need to be maintained, in part, through the

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3 Lest this sound complacent, I want to acknowledge that the extent to which cultural minorities may not be adequately represented is one of the respects in which many existing democracies are deficient.

participation of at least some members of the minorities which would stand to lose most through the absence of toleration.

In a democratic society, then, there is reason for people in general (whatever their cultural background) to acquire the kinds of capacities which make engagement in public decision-making possible. (If some people are to be exceptions to this rule there is an issue about whether they themselves decide to be so, or whether someone else makes that decision about them; I shall not enter into that issue here. It will at any rate not be for a public education system to decide in advance that certain individuals are to be excluded from its general aims.) The relevant capacities involve knowledge, understanding and critical reflection. Often these capacities must be exercised on moral issues, because so many of the issues that come up for decision within the public forum, through democratic processes, either are themselves, or involve, moral issues.

Since I have already suggested that some sort of empirical consensus may be available, it might be thought that this would be sufficient for democratic decision-making, which could proceed on the basis of agreed values, so that the issues in question would be those of means rather than ends, and critical reflection would not have to be exercised at the level of values themselves. This would be unrealistic, however. For any consensus that may be available or could be achieved, though it may be a sufficient basis for a certain amount of education into specific normative views or dispositions (especially where these concern everyday personal interactions), is likely to be at too general a level to resolve many of the issues that need to be settled publicly in a democracy. Agreed values - whether articulated in terms of norms for conduct or of virtues - can act as reference points in discussion while still leaving much to be argued over.[4]

The argument from diversity interacts with that from democracy. To be able to argue a case in the public forum it is not enough to

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[4] Later I shall argue that articulation in terms of norms for conduct may serve this function better than articulation in terms of virtues - see Part II.

know and to be able to articulate one's own position (which may be the position of one's tradition); it is not enough even to be able to offer reasons for one's position which might weigh with someone who does not share the same tradition; very often it is also necessary to understand something of the opposing positions, in order to be able to counter objections which will come from them. However, to express the argument in this way is perhaps to suggest an excessively adversarial model of democratic discussion. It can also involve, not an attempt by one side to win over the others, but a joint seeking for acceptable solutions - and that, all the more, requires an understanding of different points of view as well as, often, a certain imaginative capacity to find solutions which may be different from those originally put forward.

The importance of tolerance within a plural society supports a similar conclusion. I have already suggested that tolerance of diversity[5] would itself be one of the values which a pragmatic consensus would incorporate (even if part of the reason for this would be simply that no cultural minority could afford to claim tolerance for itself without extending tolerance to others); but tolerance is likely to be unstable to the extent that it is not accompanied by understanding. To understand, in the relevant sense, is at least to see how someone else could hold their view without being mad or evil. Where this kind of understanding is absent, democracy, if it can exist at all, will be reduced to a numbers game, and those who are unwilling (not entirely unreasonably) to let issues of values be decided on behalf of society by a counting of heads will sometimes resort to more drastic methods.

It may have been a deficiency on the part of some liberals in their response to the affair of Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses* that they had too little understanding of the way the book was perceived by many Muslims. If we assume that those liberals who

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5 There is, of course, a question about the limits of tolerance. The rest of the thesis will be relevant to this. In so far as there is provisional agreement on the content of what I shall later call morality in the narrow sense, it will be by reference to this that the limits of tolerance can be set. I have said more on tolerance in *TAV* Chapter 5.

entered into the debate were knowledgeable people capable of critical reflection, this example shows that knowledge and critical reflection do not guarantee understanding. It does not show, however, that knowledge and critical reflection are not necessary for understanding, and they surely are. In this case, for instance, it would have been relevant knowledge that veneration of the Prophet is particularly strong among the rural peasantry of South Asia, from which the majority of British Muslims take their family origins (Modood 1992, pp. 72-73).

Such knowledge on its own, though, will be of no avail unless it is put together with other relevant knowledge and understanding, and an appropriate conclusion drawn. The premises may include acknowledgement of some relevant norms: as that, for instance, it is bad for offence to be caused to people's religious sensibilities (the kind of norm which might be included in a broad social consensus). However, simple acknowledgement of such a norm leaves much of the important understanding still to come: a clearer understanding, for instance, of the nature and significance of the offence caused to Muslims by passages of *The Satanic Verses.*[6]

So even convinced secular liberals may need to reflect critically and make some effort (which will be in part an effort of self-education) in order to understand others. They may need to modify some of their cherished assumptions; but this does not apply only to them. The religious person to whom it is simply obvious that abortion equates with murder will not, without critical reflection, even understand the point of view of one to whom it is entirely a matter of a woman's right to choose - and vice versa; and the same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the heterosexual person to whom the very idea of a homosexual act is anathema, and the homosexual who feels that others wish to deny him something that is central to his identity.

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[6]The category of blasphemy is not necessarily the most appropriate one to use. See *TAV* 141-2.

Greater understanding will not generate moral conclusions by itself. It may make an issue seem more problematic than it was - in a sense, it will make it no longer the same problem - and still further thought will be needed if an answer to the problem in its new light is to be found. Although someone might respond that we have quite enough problems as it is, without raising new ones though education, I have been arguing that to hope to avoid such problems, in the kind of society we are in, is unrealistic and pragmatically undesirable. Education is essential in facing them. For many people the necessary education may in part be self-education in later life; but it would surely be foolish for a society to choose to rely on the contingencies of that, when there is so much that could be done within formal education.

I am arguing, then, that there is a need for education, not just in values, but about values[7]; I would argue more particularly, though this is to anticipate my later argument, that this applies especially to moral values. Such an education will give people some knowledge and understanding not just of the variety of value positions in the world, but of the various ways in which values enter into people's lives. It will give them some knowledge, too, of the kinds of arguments and appeals that are used by various people to support evaluative, and especially moral, positions; hence, unavoidably, it will give them some knowledge of the existence of various sorts of scepticism about morality.

I do not intend here to go into the details of the content of such an education. But it is worth noting that if education is to deliver the sort of knowledge and understanding needed, it does not follow that a curriculum has to be drawn up in advance to incorporate some predetermined range of knowledge and understanding. An equivalent effect might be achieved (at least in schools which are themselves representative of a plurality of points of view and traditions) by a culture of openness in which different voices can be heard - from different disciplines, different cultures, different

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7 Monica Taylor, editor of *The Journal of Moral Education*, has commented to me that she would have preferred my *Teaching about Values* to have been called *Teaching Values*. My arguments here perhaps show why I do not want to dispense with the 'about'.

individual teachers, parents and pupils - and in which pupils are enabled and encouraged to reflect critically on them, not only individually but also in discussion.[8]

In a society in which cultures cannot be kept in isolated compartments, away from the influence of mass media and a pervasive popular culture, individuals will hear many of these voices, albeit sometimes in crude and distorted forms, regardless of the intentions of educators. It is surely better that educators should accept the responsibility at least of enabling people to understand these voices better and to assess their worth. If this is to open Pandora's box, so be it.

In the context of this thesis, the importance of this chapter is to stress that nothing I say below will be denying the importance of an education which casts its net wide in seeking to promote an understanding of values in all their diversity, including the diversity of conceptions of morality and its content. It is important to stress this because I shall be going on to focus on a possible shared understanding of morality and its content. My point is *not* that educators should fasten in advance - in the spirit of the 'authoritative answer' - on a conception of morality and its content as *the* right one, and inculcate that to the exclusion of all else. Rather, I want to argue that *within* an awareness and understanding of diversity, it should be possible for people to coincide in acknowledging *one* conception of morality (among others), and in seeking agreement on content in the light of that acknowledgement. In arguing this, I shall be denying that just any overlap in values which happens to hold should be taken as a basis for moral education; in that respect, I shall also be departing from a simple empirical consensus view.

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8 On the importance of discussion see *TAV* pp. 142-6 and Haydon (1999d)

Chapter Three
From values to morality

The SCAA Forum

I hope I have made clear that in arguing that values education does need to aim at a broad awareness of and understanding of differences, I have not rejected the search for something held in common. On the contrary, I agree with those who hold that (in the Swann Report phrase) 'a framework of shared values' is necessary in a plural society. I also want to argue, though, that what is needed is not just any values that happen to be shared. What is needed, one might say, is a shared *morality* - at least in one sense of that difficult term. At the same time, to aim for a shared morality may seem over-ambitious in a plural society. It will be important for my argument to distinguish two possible objects of agreement. One is a particular understanding of the nature of morality, on which agreement, provided it is approached in a pragmatic spirit, should not be impossible. The other is the detailed content of that morality, on which no more than a provisional and shifting agreement is to be expected.

That the idea of a shared morality lies behind some of the recommendations of bodies like the Swann Committee and the SCAA Forum is not often said explicitly and probably not always realised even implicitly. No doubt this is at least in part because of the sort of suspicion about the idea of morality to which I referred in Chapter 1. Given that sort of suspicion, many people may be more comfotable in talking about values; and when they are talking about shared values, they may not realise that there is still a further issue about the importance of shared values.

Just from the idea that a value is shared - if that is taken to mean that a similar value is held by many people, perhaps by the majority of the community - it does not follow that this is a moral value. If, for instance, it were to be found by an opinion poll that 90% of the population of Britain think that it is a pity that Geri left the Spice Girls and that Gazza was left out of England's World Cup

squad[1] this might well say something about the values of the English people but not necessarily anything about their moral values. And without further argument there would be no reason to think that it matters whether values of this sort are or are not shared.

In fact, a search for shared values, in a context of education and pluralism, is unlikely ever to be just a search for any values that happen to be held in common. It will be a search motivated by certain purposes, though the purposes may not be made explicit, and may indeed to some degree be confused.[2] I shall try to illustrate the point by reference to the SCAA Forum. Here the reader may need a certain amount of background knowledge, which I have included in two appendices. Appendix 2 gives a brief review of the workings of the SCAA Forum, concentrating on points which are particularly relevant to the argument I am developing here. This brief review is based mainly on materials already in the public domain, but I have also drawn on personal experience, since I was myself a member of the Forum. Appendix 3 presents the outcome of the Forum's work on the first part of its remit: the Statement of Values, including its Preamble.

The essential information at this point is that the members of the Forum were asked at the outset to see if they could find values on which they all agreed (and on which they thought the rest of society would agree). They were not told to seek a common morality. But there was a context in the background, and in some of the written materials provided, which did tend to point in a

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[1] Since any topical reference would be likely to become rapidly dated, I have let these anachronistic references remain, from a first draft in June 1998, as an indication of how ephemeral certain sorts of value claim can be.

[2] While I am going to argue that the purposes behind the setting up of the SCAA Forum meant that it was a common morality that was being sought, I am not arguing that the same purpose would underlie *a n y* search for common values. One can imagine, for instance, that a focus on nationality (which has also been one of the concerns of Nick Tate, who was Chief Executive of SCAA) might motivate a search for common values, and in that case values relating to popular culture or to sport might well be relevant.

certain direction, though not (as we shall see further) unambiguously so.

The background context was a concern about people's behaviour. The underlying concern was not, for instance, 'too many people like the Spice Girls and too few people appreciate Bach: what can we do about people's aesthetic values?'; or 'too many of the people who say they believe in God lack sufficient respect for God; and of the others, too many people think it doesn't matter whether they believe in God or not' - which arguably could indicate a concern about religious values. Or even if such concerns as these were present in the minds of some members of the Forum, far more prominent was a thought like 'It's terrible that Philip Lawrence has been murdered by a youth outside his own school; what can we do about this sort of thing?'.[3] In other words, more generally, there was the idea that, for all the attention that schools had been giving to academic matters, something must be going wrong in education if it didn't influence for the better people's behaviour towards each other.

With this background, it is not surprising that the language used (from an early stage of the drafting) to express values was a language about conduct, talking of what was to be done or not to be done. There are possible exceptions in the Statement as agreed, such as 'respect' or 'care for', but in the context it is natural to take these terms as referring to actions, not just attitudes. It is not surprising, too, that values were expressed prescriptively, in terms of what people *should* do; it is not seen as a matter of indifference whether people act in certain ways or not. And the prescriptions are expressed as things *we* should do, where 'we' means all of us.

Here, I suggest, we see three common marks of morality; or at least of what I shall refer to below as 'morality in the narrow sense': that morality (a) concerns conduct rather than (or rather

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[3] See Appendix 2 for the relevant chronology.

than merely) belief, attitude and the like;[4] (b) is prescriptive, telling us what we are to do (unlike, say, aesthetics which does not - unless it is already merging into morality - carry demands that we should do or refrain from doing anything in particular[5]); and (c) is seen as applying not just to one or the other of us but to everyone.

So far these marks of moral values still leave room for the notion of an individual's moral values, perhaps even idiosyncratic ones; something may be a moral value which I hold if I think that it makes demands on people's action and that it does this for everyone, even if others do not in fact recognise this. But we also have the notion of morality as a system of values existing within society[6] and tending to produce a degree of conformity in the actions of different persons within society, and hence to some degree reducing the conflict which might ensue if persons acted only on non-moral reasons. Arguably the existence of morality as a social system is prior to our being able to conceive of such a thing as an individual morality. In any case, morality is an existent phenomenon which makes a difference to the life of a society, and it cannot do this if it does not contain at least some considerable degree of agreement on values across a society. So we can take it as a further mark of moral values, in their social manifestation, that they are fairly widely shared. And this appears to be true of the values in the Forum's list: not only were they put forward as being values which the Forum members both agreed on and thought to be more widely agreed on, but SCAA also claimed empirical evidence (gleaned through a professional

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4 This is, of course, is not uncontroversial. I shall not leave it unquestioned in my discussion of morality(n); the chapter on motivation will be especially relevant.

5 It may appear that aesthetic reasons can underpin prescriptions for action. E.g. 'If doing a given dance-step in a given way is aesthetically better than doing it in some different way, isn't it reasonable to conclude that the first way is the way the step *should* be done...?' (Slote 1996 p.108; his italics). The obvious answer to this is the Kantian one, that any imperative deriving from this aesthetic judgement is hypothetical; there is nothing to say anyone has to be doing this dance-step in the first place. The issue would bear more discussion, but is not particularly germane to my thesis.

6 See, for example (among many other sources) Cooper (1970) and Strawson (1974).

public opinion survey) of a widespread consensus on them. (There is a further question, to which I shall return in Chapter 9, of how far agreement at a verbal level may mask underlying disagreement.)

We can say, then, something about the way in which the Forum interpreted its task of finding common values (if we cannot say how far this interpretation was present in the minds of individual members at the beginning, we can still say it was the collective interpretation that emerged). What the Forum worked towards was to draw up an itemised statement of what people should do, where the items in the statement were meant to apply to everyone, and where there was meant to be wide agreement on the items across society. If this is what the Forum was doing, then in effect at least it was looking, not just for any values which might be shared, but for a shared morality, because this is the sort of thing a morality is - at least on one plausible understanding of the nature of morality.

I have already said, though, that the background context from which the Forum began was not unambiguously one that would point towards this interpretation of its task. As a step towards clarifying what is involved in the idea of a common morality, I want to look at factors in the background context that made the Forum's task less clear than it might otherwise have been.

The Forum's remit contained reference not only to 'values on which there is agreement across society' but also to the OFSTED categories (referred to above in Chapter 1) of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. So there was explicit reference to something other than the moral; and more particularly within the written material provided to members there was reference to 'moral and spiritual development'. In fact in the educational rhetoric for several years prior to the setting up of the Forum the terms 'spiritual and moral' had often been coupled (far more frequently than any of the other possible pairings out of 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural'). They were explicitly linked in a discussion paper first issued by the NCC (1993; reissued as SCAA

1995); then in Nick Tate's keynote speech at the conference convened by SCAA in January 1996 which immediately preceded the setting up of the Forum; and in a number of the position papers prepared for that conference.

Did this linking of the spiritual and the moral influence the workings of the Forum? Anecdotally, I can recall that in the group of about a dozen of which I was a member, there were one or two people who thought, at least at the first meeting, that the important thing was to find agreement on spiritual values - perhaps on the ground that these were seen as fundamental. In the Forum's final list (see Appendix 3), specifically in the context of 'the self', one can see a number of items, such as 'we should clarify the meaning and purpose in our lives and decide, on the basis of this, how we believe that our lives should be lived' and 'we should strive, throughout life, for knowledge, wisdom and understanding' which arguably figure in the list because notions of spirituality, rather than of morality, were uppermost in some minds.

Development: moral and spiritual compared

I think it will help to differentiate the notion of morality which I wish to pursue if I can drive something of a wedge between these two notions which in educational contexts have been so often linked in recent years.[7] First, why has a link between them often been perceived? In part it may be no more than a hangover from the once very common assumption that moral education was best treated within the context of religious education. But it seems since ERA to have become fairly widely accepted - and acknowledged in documents from NCC, SCAA and OFSTED - that spiritual development, however it may be characterised in positive terms, does not have to take a specifically religious form, and that its promotion within education does not have to be confined to RE. Spirituality is often seen as a matter of something

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7 Interestingly, if one were approaching the questions of this thesis only from a background of moral philosophy one might see no need to raise any question of the relation between the moral and the spiritual. One could do (I did) moral philosophy (or perhaps I should say Oxford moral philosophy) for years without seeing a need to investigate any such relation.

like a person's attitude or mindset towards life and the world, or the sense which individuals have of their place in some wider scheme of things - and I use 'sense' here to accommodate both cognitive and affective aspects of experience.[8] Some people, for instance, may be able to give an intellectualised account of their place in the universe, others may feel at one with the world, or may feel alienated from it without being able to rationalise this; while for some, reason and feeling may concur in an integrated way. For some people religion will provide the basis of their spiritual condition, but this does not mean that people without religion will lack any spiritual condition.

Apart, then, from historical factors, why should it be thought that there is a special link between spiritual development and morality? In Nick Tate's speech and many of the position papers prepared for the January 1996 conference, out of which the Forum was born, there seems to be something like the following connection. There is a concern with people's conduct, as pointed out above, and a concern to find common values. But it is acknowledged that the recognition of a common set of values, even where this takes the form of a moral code, does not by itself guarantee anything about how people will behave. This means that some attention has to be paid to people's motivation. And the idea of the spiritual seems to be introduced in order to provide a necessary motivational context. People's motivation in taking moral values seriously is seen as an aspect of their spiritual condition.

If we are interested in the existence of a shared morality we can hardly be uninterested in whether people have any motivation to follow it (a point to which I shall return in Chapter 10).

Nevertheless, the attempt to look to the idea of spirituality for the necessary motivation brings problems with it. It is liable to lead

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8 I am not attempting to offer a definition. I am reporting my sense of the current state of the debate. It would be possible to compare and contrast accounts of spirituality as found both in official documents and in recent academic commentary. However, (a) this has been done before, e.g. by Kevin Mott-Thornton in a London University thesis and by Jonathan Long in an Oxford University thesis; and (b) it would divert me too far from the mainstream of my argument.

to the thought that as people develop spiritually, so they will develop morally; and it may further be thought that if there is a certain pattern of moral development which is to be encouraged, so too there will be a certain pattern of spiritual development which will go along with it. But any such assumption may well be mistaken; at any rate I shall argue that it is an important difference between moral and spiritual development that while there may indeed be a particular, generally desirable pattern of moral development (at least if we have in mind morality in the narrow sense), there is no such particular pattern of spiritual development; there simply are many different ways in which spirituality may develop. (An alternative way of putting this might be that in the case of spirituality there is no way of delineating such a thing as 'spirituality in the narrow sense' in contrast to some wider and more multifarious range of possibilities).

Besides, if, as I have suggested, society's concern with moral development is at bottom a concern with people's behaviour, a concern with spiritual development which was taken as backing up moral development would be an instrumental concern. For my own part (and the arguments of the next chapter may give backing to this) it seems to me legitimate that there should be certain social expectations as to how people should behave, embodied in something like a moral code. But it is far from clear that society has a legitimate expectation that adherence to such a code should flow from one sort of spiritual condition or another; it is not clear that society has a legitimate interest in people's spiritual condition at all (I do not need to hold this as a universal truth; it will be enough if it holds of modern, plural, more-or-less liberal societies).

This does not preclude the possibility that the education of any individual may have something to do, or even *ought* to have something to do, with that individual's spiritual development. That is presumably because spiritual development is of value in its own right, and not just as a means towards good behaviour. If a common educational policy for moral development does need, as

I'm sure it does, to pay attention to motivational factors, perhaps it should do this directly, as an aspect of moral development, while keeping as clear as possible a distinction between moral and spiritual development. Too close a coupling, in educational rhetoric, of the moral and the spiritual risks making it more difficult to find or construct a shared understanding of morality across a society in which a variety of religious traditions co-exist with secular outlooks. This is *not* because the idea of the spiritual has to be tied to religion. It is because, even if we recognise a secular sense of spirituality, we also have to recognise that the idea of spirituality allows for a much greater range of individual variation than does that of morality.

It will not, however, do to say simply - though I have been tempted by this - that while spirituality is an individual matter, morality is social. For there is a sense in which both must be social. The beliefs and attitudes involved in either must draw on some culturally available stock of concepts and understandings (for both moral and spiritual development must in part be species of conceptual development). And this means that for any given individual there may indeed be considerable overlap between the spiritual and the moral development of that person. But if we make comparisons across individuals it appears that the possible forms of moral development are more limited than those of spiritual development. In a modern plural society, with centuries behind it of the most diverse thought about the human condition and about the universe - theistic and atheistic, scientific, literary and artistic - the stock of ideas on which spiritual development can draw is so vast that there is no reason in advance to expect that the spiritual development of different individuals will take similar forms - rather the reverse. By contrast, in the case of moral development the possibilities are limited by the public social reality and function of morality (on which I shall have more to say).

I would suggest too that the role of the affective is more central in spiritual development than in moral. While some notions of spirituality may go too far towards making it largely a matter of

an individual's emotional repertoire (notions, for instance, which do little more than gesture towards awe and wonder), I doubt whether we could make any sense of the spiritual *without* reference to the life of the emotions. The affective will also be important in the moral development of an individual; but this thesis will be arguing that the more cognitive, linguistically expressed aspect of morality can be transferred onto the public social plane and still, as it were, have a life of its own, whereas this seems not to be possible for spirituality. It is for the same reasons that formal (and mass) education can more readily get a grip on moral development than on spiritual.[9]

Because of the social reality and function of morality we are constrained to look for common elements in moral development which we do not have to expect in spiritual development. Consider a minimal but evaluatively positive notion of development, which only requires that it be a change for the better. To apply this notion, to say that someone has *developed*, requires *some* standpoint from which to judge whether a change is a change for the better. And if notions such as moral and spiritual development are to be useful *in public discourse*, there will have to be a standpoint which is at least fairly widely shared. While it is true for both moral and spiritual development that any standpoint which could be adopted will be drawing on a culturally available set of materials, it is also true that there is more likely to be agreement on a standpoint from which the notion of moral development can be applied than on any from which the notion of spiritual development can be applied.

Suppose we say, rather formally, that the moral development of an individual implies an improvement in the individual's moral condition (whatever that may be) and similarly that the spiritual development of an individual implies an improvement in the individual's spiritual condition (whatever that may be). Although in each case I have inserted 'whatever that may be' in order to indicate that there is room for differences of interpretation, the notion of an individual's moral condition lends itself to an

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9 For a rather different view on these matters see Mott-Thornton (1998).

interpretation in terms of adherence or otherwise to recognised values. That is (to put it in a schematic way which will admittedly appear crude) if values a, b, and c are among the values which are central to the morality of a given society, one might say that a member of that society has progressed in his or her moral development just in so far as he or she has come to share the values a, b and c. Development here is being judged from the standpoint of values widely shared, which have (to quote the Preamble to the SCAA Forum's Statement) 'the authority of consensus'.[10]

There is a sense in which this way of looking at moral development makes the judgement of development culture-relative. I think that if there is to be a common public policy for moral education and moral development, reference to at least some shared values is unavoidable. (It is true that in such terms one could speak of moral development from a Nazi perspective; but the objection to that is the objection to Nazi values, not an objection to a way of conceiving of moral development.) In fact most if not all accounts of moral development do turn out to have some substantive content built into the standpoint from which development is judged. Aristotle's certainly did; Kohlberg's scheme judges moral development to have progressed further to the extent that people adopt a morality of universal rights (which is the liberal morality of a certain kind of society); theorists of caring judge moral development to have progressed further to the extent that people have come to exercise care and responsibility.

On any such account of moral development, then, there can be a common policy for moral development just in so far as there are certain shared moral values, from the standpoint of which the degree of development can be assessed (these shared values may include the ideas that it is a good thing for people to be able to think for themselves and that it is a bad thing for people to be indoctrinated). Admittedly such a conception of moral development could be applied in rather crude behavioural terms,

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10 Chapter 11 will in effect be considering what we can make of this notion of authority.

and I would not want to endorse it in that form. But it is in any case significant that a standpoint which judges moral development in terms of adherence to shared values is available and is usable in public discourse. Not only that, but such a standpoint does reflect some of the public concerns which lie behind calls for more effective moral education in schools.

In contrast there is no such publicly available and agreed standpoint for speaking of spiritual development. This is actually for two interlocking reasons: both that the notion of spiritual condition does not lend itself to interpretation in terms of observable behaviour, and that even apart from observable marks there is no shared sense of what constitutes a spiritually better condition. This second point depends on the pluralism of our society; there have been societies in which it would have been just as widely agreed that becoming an atheist is not an improvement in spiritual condition as that becoming a murderer is not an improvement in moral condition. But in modern plural societies there is so much room for disagreement in interpretations of an improvement in spiritual condition (as well as for disagreement over whether there is *anything* that counts as a spiritual condition) that the prospect of a publicly agreed standpoint for judging spiritual development is remote.

I have been concerned to distinguish moral from spiritual development. What of the other two OFSTED categories, cultural and social development? For completeness here I shall suggest, without extended argument, that moral development can be distinguished also from both of these - except where there is indeed an overlap.

Cultural development on the most natural interpretation of the phrase will include development in knowledge and understanding of culture, and in a plural society it would be natural to interpret the relevant knowledge and understanding as being especially though not exclusively that of the individual's own culture. Of course, problems immediately arise as to what is to be interpreted as 'the culture' of any young person in contemporary England. But

on one plausible model of a plural society, it will not matter, and may indeed be something to be celebrated, if individuals' *cultural* development proceeds in different directions, and with different content, provided that a minimal *common* basis of *moral* development is there. The common basis itself, though, will have to include some understanding of cultural diversity, for the reasons I have already given in the previous chapter.

For *social* development something similar seems to apply. Of course, many moral prescriptions relate to how a person is to behave in society, but once these are included in the sphere of moral development, what else is left for social development to be? It will involve the acquisition of certain skills - what are, indeed, often called social skills - and it will involve the acquisition of knowledge about society. But it is not clear that there are values involved in social development which are prescriptive or obligatory on everyone, and which would not already be covered under a listing of moral values. Accepting one's responsibilities and recognising other people's rights, for instance - which in the QCA guidance are mentioned under 'social development' - are likely to be included in a listing of moral prescriptions. In contrast, being an outgoing, sociable sort of person is not a part of morality in at least one sense of the term, because it is not obligatory on everyone; indeed recognising people's rights would normally include recognising that they are within their rights if they choose not to live in an outgoing sociable kind of way[11] (see Appendix 4 for more on the language of rights).

To conclude this admittedly limited consideration of moral and spiritual development, I am suggesting that we should distinguish

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[11] At this point I am taking a somewhat Kantian rather than Aristotelian approach - indeed the example of sociability is not a bad one for illustrating the difference, since something very like sociability figures in Aristotle's list of virtues, while Kant in the *Groundwork* explicitly uses the example of a thoroughly unsociable person who can nevertheless be a shining example of the fulfilment of moral obligation. We have to remember that we are talking here about something which might come to be prescribed as common policy by a government agency - within a state which is very far from Aristotle's kind of polity. For this context, I think I do want to defend a rather Kantian conception of the moral values that should be promoted as common, and this will come through in my arguments below in favour of a language of norms.

moral values - as values which are seen as prescriptive for everyone within a society - from other values which may be involved in certain patterns of spiritual (and indeed social or cultural) development but which will not be prescriptive for everyone. On this basis we would be able to identify a certain common pattern of moral development, in terms of content, while we would not be able to identify a common pattern - common in the sense that everyone ought to be encouraged to follow it - for spiritual, cultural or social development. And we could then use the question, 'Do we think that everyone will be more developed to the extent that they come to hold this or that value?', as one way of distinguishing whether it is moral development or some other kind of development that we are talking about.

Taking stock

To take stock at the end of this first Part, I want to agree with those who argue that values education - to use the broader term again - should be informed by a sense of values held in common (as well as by awareness of diversity). But I also want to say that the mere fact of being held in common is not in itself of fundamental importance. We need to consider why we are interested in certain values being held in common; and this consideration will lead us, I suggest, to realise that one of the things we are interested in is a shared morality, in one sense of that term. If common values are to be seen as prescriptive, then the search for such will make more sense if it is informed by a shared understanding of the nature of morality. Then that understanding of morality will be more basic than any particular content agreed on at a given time. We should not expect full consensus on the content of morality at any one time, because the underlying sense of the nature of morality will allow for some disagreement in specifics. Correspondingly, the educational task of promoting a shared understanding of morality will be more basic than promoting adherence to particular values which are taken to be shared.

But is this a realistic conception of one of the tasks of education in the face of the diversity of understandings - including conceptions

of morality - which I have already stressed? Recalling some of my points in Chapter 2, we could adopt an alternative conception of the educational task; we could say that we should concentrate on reinforcing agreement where we find it, even if it is at a superficial level, and let underlying understandings of morality look after themselves. In part, I have already shown in Chapter 2 why I think that response is unsatisfactory. I want to add that the very diversity of understandings creates possibilities for *mi*sunderstanding, and sheer talking at cross-purposes, which education has a responsibility to try to mitigate. This is a point I shall take up again in Chapter 13, when I shall argue that there is good reason for citizenship education to take on the task of promoting a certain shared understanding of morality.

Clearly it is a presupposition of this argument that there is available a way of understanding morality which could be shared across a plural society. I think that there is; it is the idea of morality in the narrow sense which I shall address throughout the bulk of this thesis. It is not an unfamiliar way of thinking of morality - indeed if it were not a way of thinking which is already quite widespread it would be less likely to be able to play the role which I envisage for it. At the same time, since I want to argue that education should explicitly bring out and focus on this way of seeing morality, it is important to my argument to show that this conception of morality is viable and is potentially widely intelligible. That is why the bulk of this thesis is concerned with unpacking the idea of morality in the narrow sense. What is its function? In what sort of terms can it be articulated? Can it be seen as having any kind of authority? I want to pursue such questions in a way which avoids philosophical naiveté, but at the same time I want my unpacking of the idea to be one which is intelligible, or could readily be made intelligible, to a philosophically unsophisticated audience - for if this is not possible, there will be little point in recommending that teachers should have a firm grasp of morality in the narrow sense.

Part II

Morality(n) and its languages

In Chapter Four I outline a particular - and familiar - conception of morality - morality in the narrow sense, or morality(n) - which is a putatively a conception which could be widely shared. I go on to consider how such a morality is to be articulated. To use a language of norms seems to me most natural, but since there has been much recent advocacy in the literature of the merits of virtue ethics, I begin in Chapter 5 to consider how far a language of virtues could function as the language in which morality(n) is articulated. Since that discussion is rather abstract, I supplement it in Chapter 6 by considering the ways we talk about one particular area of public moral concern - violence.

Two further discussions arising from Part 2 have been put in the Appendices since they are not central to my main argument. Appendix 4 considers whether a language confined to talk of rights could do the job of morality(n). Then, on the assumption that morality(n) is to be articulated primarily in terms of norms, but not in terms of rights alone, Appendix 5 begins to consider what the norms relating to violence might be - which is closely related to the question of what we understand violence to be.

Chapter Four
Morality in the narrow sense

Morality and law

I have suggested that in looking for shared values which were seen as having force for people's conduct, the SCAA Forum was in effect looking for a shared morality. This does not imply that a shared understanding was achieved on what kind of thing morality is - no such agreement was explicitly aimed at - but it does point in the direction in which such an agreement might be found. The key is to be found, I think, in the idea that morality has a social function, and in a certain understanding of what that function is.

In pursuing that line of thought, it will be best to forestall certain objections at the beginning. I do not intend what I say about the function of morality to capture everything which the notion of morality means to many of the people to whom that notion is important. I shall have more to say about what the notion of morality which I am developing leaves out. For the moment, it is best to refer to the notion I am discussing in a terminology first used, to my knowledge, by John Mackie: 'morality in the narrow sense', which I shall henceforth usually abbreviate to morality(n).

Briefly, the suggestion is that morality has a similar function to that of law. Better put, there seems to be a function which morality and law offer different, though related, means of fulfilling. The plausibility of this can be shown by telling a story of the common origins of law and morality(n). Whether this story is anthropologically accurate is beyond my competence to judge; but if it sounds plausible, that fact by itself demonstrates the plausibility of an analysis of morality(n) which likens it to law.

We can, like Hart (1961 p.89) in *The Concept of Law*, think of a community (perhaps of hunter-gatherers) in which there are common expectations about conduct but no systematic way, either in form or content, in which one class of expectations is

differentiated from another.[1] Where there is divergence from a certain expectation there may be disapproval in some form - it might be in facial expression or body language - and this will be among the ways in which ways of doing things are learned and hence maintained from one generation to another.

Simply in talking of expectations, of a shared sense of what is done and what is not done, we are not yet talking of morality *as opposed to* law - or indeed to etiquette, say, or religious observance. But we are already referring to the roots of both morality and law as the social practices or institutions which, later, they would become; and since we are already talking of ways of doing things which are not instinctive, but have to be learned, we are talking of the roots of education too.

Though there is no single function which the expectations about conduct in such a community would have performed, some of them will in fact have tended to help the affairs of the community to run smoothly, by protecting its members against their vulnerability both to external dangers and to other members of the same society (Hart *ibid.* Ch. 9). For example, once weapons are in use, there are likely to be norms about maintaining them in effective condition; and also, since weapons which could be used in hunting will be potentially lethal to members of the group, there are likely to be norms about safe and non-malicious use too. In the conduct of the hunt, co-operation and co-ordination of the actions of members of the group will be vital (the consequences of lack of co-operation and co-ordination will not just be inconvenience, but at times could be violent death or starvation). So expectations about co-operation and co-ordination will develop and will need to be taken very seriously. Then again, there are likely to be norms about how an animal killed is to be used by the group, whether divided up or not, and so on. So a variety of expectations will tend either to protect members of the

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[1] Hart (*ibid.*) speaks of the norms of conduct, even prior to the differentiation of law and morality, as 'rules of obligation', but this may be already to have read back into the description of the situation a conception from a later way of thinking. I shall be considering below whether morality(n) has to be articulated in terms of rules and obligations.

community or to protect the way of life of the community itself against things which can go wrong.[2]

We can make sense of the existence of such expectations independently of the distinction between law and morality. Perhaps in time it will happen that if someone takes a larger than usual share of the kill, there are mutterings of disapproval but nothing more; whereas if one member of the group turns their weapon on another, the first member is brought before a gathering which prescribes a penalty. Then with hindsight, we might say that fairness in division is a moral expectation but the prohibition on violence within the group is (also) legal. There still need not be any significant difference in the way that the expectations are initially learned by children; they will learn that certain things are done and certain things not done before they have any clear or differentiated sense of what happens, in the adult world, when one expectation or another is violated.[3]

Much in the picture sketched so far can be carried over, I suggest, to education in expected ways of behaving even in a modern complex society. Children today learn all kinds of ways in which things are done, and also learn that certain things are not to be done; and they are likely to acquire such vocabulary as 'ought not to' and 'wrong' - as part of the repertoire they recognise, even if they do not use it themselves - well before they acquire the terms 'morality' and 'law', or are able to differentiate between what is morally wrong and what is legally wrong.[4] Perhaps, too, for many

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[2] Contrary to the way some might interpret talk of morality(n), such an account does not commit one to a Hobbesian individualism or to anachronistically reading into the consciousness of the members of the community any specifically modern conception of 'the individual'.

[3] Notice that once the morality/law distinction is made, it need not be a distinction in content. It is to be expected that moral and legal norms will overlap considerably in what they prescribe or proscribe (deliberate killing of another member of the group is one obvious example; cf. Hart (1961) Ch. 9 for some others). How far the similarity between law and morality extends will turn to a large extent on matters of form rather than content.

[4] It is possible, though I shall not pursue the point, that the psychological emergence of certain distinctions in individual consciousness parallels their historical emergence in human societies; cf. Habermas's (1979) way of applying the developmental theories of Piaget and Kohlberg to the evolution of society.

adults the idea that children should be taught what is right and what is wrong - where this in turn is conceived in terms of adherence to norms - is used in a blanket way with little weight given to the morality/law distinction. When an event like the murder of Philip Lawrence leads to calls that schools must do more to stamp in and reinforce a sense of right and wrong, this popular reaction may see little need to distinguish between moral and legal right and wrong. Perhaps this is correct, in the sense that society's need for certain sorts of conduct to be ruled out is more basic than the division between morality and law. (It is significant in this respect that when MacIntyre (1981 p.141) argues that any community needs, in addition to virtues, a recognition of certain offences as beyond the pale, he uses for the later kind of 'evaluative practice' the phrase 'a morality of laws'.)

What we have so far, then, is the notion that any society needs a basic framework of expectations (and that these, of course, need to be sustained from generation to generation). The need for this framework is in a sense prior to the distinction between morality and law. (One of the clearest statements of this idea is in Hobbes, where 'the state of nature' is the name for the human condition prior to both morality and law. In Hobbes, moral rules by themselves would be of no avail if they were not backed up by political sovereignty and so, in effect, treated precisely *as* laws.) The notion of the basic framework is also in Hart, as mentioned above; and within philosophy of education it is recognised by John White (e.g. 1990, p. 37; *TRAW* p. 22) among others.

One matter on which theorists differ is just how the distinction between morality and law is to be made; granted it may seem obvious to us now, in a modern Western society, what is law and what is not, but even if it is obvious there is still a task for philosophy in explicating the rationale of the distinction; and once theorists try to give that explication, it can turn out, as in the writings of Ronald Dworkin, that the distinction is not so clear after all.

Here I shall not enter into discussion of what makes certain norms law, rather than (merely, as some might say) moral expectations. I shall assume that the distinction can be made in a sufficiently clear way for it to make sense (in modern societies, but not in the kind of community in the story above) to talk about an analogy between morality and law. If we claim such an analogy we are saying that law and morality are not (now) the same thing, but that there are important similarities between them. For instance, morality has often been seen, like law, as containing many prohibitions on certain kinds of act; and violations of the prohibitions have sometimes been seen in both cases as liable to call forth some sort of sanction (even though, in the case of morality, it may be only a sanction of public disapproval).

To refer to such similarities is not, in logic, to endorse any particular story of the origins of morality and of law, though some story of common origins may in fact explain the similarities. Even if a story of common roots is true, many distinctions will have developed over time, so that it is now normal in common practice and usage to distinguish law and morality. Whatever the analogies, then, there are certainly also going to be disanalogies. For instance, if both law and morality involve sanctions of a kind, the sanctions of morality may be unenforceable, and may indeed be internal (as in Mill's *Utilitarianism* Ch. 3). There are certainly going to be points at which an analogy between law and morality cannot be sustained; this means that pointing out particular points of difference will not in itself be an argument against the analogy.

There is also an important ambiguity to be considered at this point. While it is clear that there has been much argument in recent moral philosophy against construing morality on a model of law - from writers as varied as Anscombe (1997, first published1958) and Bauman (1993), and in philosophy of education John White (1990 pp. 40-42) - many of the objections have been against the idea, not of morality as analogous to the positive law of states, but of morality as a system of law which is universal, and independent of and authoritative over the positive law of states. Construing morality in this latter way retains some

points of analogy between morality and law but also sets up clear differences. It makes it evident, for instance, that morality applies much more widely than just to the citizens of a state; and it can set law and morality against each other, in that morality can be appealed to in criticism of the law.

In effect, then, there are two versions of the analogy between morality and law. Many of the criticisms of such an analogy in the literature - such as general criticisms of the role of rules in morality - will apply to both versions, but some will apply to one only. Criticisms of natural law and Kantian conceptions of morality will not necessarily have force against morality construed as much closer to positive law. Anscombe, for instance, puts weight on the point that (if we no longer have God as law-giver in the picture) there can be nothing in the role of legislator for a universal moral law. If the Kantian conception of the autonomous self as law-giver is also rejected (see K. Baier (1973) pp. 101-4, as well as Anscombe), then there can be no moral law.

Here, however, I shall consciously be pursuing an analogy between morality and the positive law of states (one also remarked by Griffin 1996). On this, objections of Anscombe's kind largely miss the mark. Law in the positive sense (which is surely, at least now, the standard sense, whether or not it was the original sense of the word) clearly does not lack a legislator (which need not be a single person), and, since it does exist, is clearly not impossible. What if anything stands in the role of legislator in the case of morality(n) will be taken up in Chapter 11.

Morality and the wider ethical sphere

For all that has been said so far, once we look further away from matters of function and form, and bring into our sights matters of individual feelings, attitudes, perceptions, ideals (the list could go on), it becomes clear (and has been emphasised in much recent moral philosophy) that there are many aspects of morality that cannot be captured in the analogy with law. That is why we need something like the notion of morality *in the narrow sense*, which seems to correspond approximately to that area of morality which

does share its function (though not necessarily, as we shall see in the next chapter, its *form*) with that of law.

This notion of morality in the narrow sense has come in for a certain amount of criticism from moral philosophers in recent years. However, most of the criticism has been of one of two kinds. (What I say in this paragraph and the next will be far from satisfying to philosophers of education or moral philosophers who in recent years have been convinced by writers such as Charles Taylor and Bernard Williams that there is something seriously amiss with narrow notions of morality. I therefore add more in the next section.) Some criticism has been of particular ways of unpacking the form of morality(n); for instance, seeing it very much in terms of obligations. The question of the form that morality(n) should take is one I have still to consider, so this kind of criticism will be addressed as the argument proceeds.

Other criticisms have been directed against the idea that morality(n) is all there is to morality - or to ethics, which is often now taken as the broader term. But this is not a criticism that applies to the position I am arguing here. I not only acknowledge, but I would myself stress, that the sphere of the moral or the ethical can and does extend well beyond morality(n). It can encompass individual's deepest concerns about how they should live their lives and about what sort of persons they are to be; thus it can involve various sorts of evaluation: evaluations of actions, of attitudes, of personal qualities, of individual lifestyles, even of whole cultures. Roughly speaking, the further the sphere of morality or ethics is extended, and the more kinds of evaluation it takes in, the more room there is for differences and disagreements within that sphere.[5] My aim here is to delineate a minimal conception which could, despite wider variations, be shared.

I want to try, then, to construe morality(n) in a positive light, and to see whether, in making sense of the notion, we are committed to interpretations which will not stand up to criticism. I also want

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5 And in the light of the previous chapter we could add 'the more difficult it becomes to distinguish morality from spirituality'.

to see morality(n) here, taking up the discussion from Chapter 2, as the morality which we can expect to be shared across a society of diversity (without wishing that formulation to be taken as a definition). If we can find empirical consensus in the area of morality at all, we are more likely to find it in relation to morality(n) than over the whole field of morality or ethics more widely construed. Consensus may be all the more likely if the search is guided by a shared understanding of the idea of morality(n) itself. But that is to anticipate. For the moment, it is also worth noting that the idea of morality(n) fits well with the idea, common in recent Anglo-American liberal theory, as well as in Habermas, that there is both more need for and more scope for agreement on the right than the good, and that in a certain sense an ethic of the right must have priority in a liberal society. Thus Habermas distinguishes *moral* questions from what he calls *evaluative* or *ethical* questions 'which fall into the general category of issues of the *good life*' (1990 p. 178).

I have no quarrel with the widespread views that education should be concerned with enabling people to live, if possible, a good life; that a good life for one will not, in details, be the same as a good life for another; hence that, in modern plural societies especially, much of the purpose of education will be enable individuals to find for themselves and to pursue a good life; and that (to put it rather crudely) individuals in doing this will have to integrate whatever allegiance they may have to shared moral values with other values which are important to them. But what I am concerned about here is whether we can still, recognising all this, keep open the possibility of a shared morality which actually helps to make the pursuit of a good life possible.

Notice that this position not only recognises that the field of values is wider than that of morality. It also in a sense makes certain values more fundamental than morality; these are the values which morality itself subserves. Philosophers such as Hobbes, and more recently Mackie and Geoffrey Warnock, did see certain things clearly, even if their focus was a narrow one (some might say blinkered). They saw that human beings do value, and would

be likely in almost all circumstances to value, freedom from pain and injury, from assault and danger of death, from hunger and isolation. They may have been wrong in supposing (if they did suppose) that in all conceivable circumstances morality(n) would be necessary if these values were to be realised; maybe, as more optimistic views of the human condition would have it, fellow-feeling and altruism could eliminate the need for morality(n) as we know it. But that does not alter the point that morality(n) can be seen as one way at least in which human communities may to a degree obtain and protect something of what they value. To that extent the popular perception of morality as something which schools should promote in order to protect people from anti-social behaviour is fully in line with a long-standing philosophical conception of morality.[6]

Criticisms of a narrow notion of morality

There have been influential critics in recent years of morality(n) - at least this is what I have often taken them to be criticising. I have in mind especially Bernard Williams and Charles Taylor. A number of writers in philosophy of education, including John White, have been influenced by Williams and Taylor. Williams, as is well known, criticised 'morality, the peculiar institution', in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*; and Taylor (1995) has expressed his broad agreement with Williams, having previously in his own right contributed to the critique of morality(n) in *Sources of the Self* (Taylor 1989b).

Here I do not need to take up all of the many points raised by Williams and Taylor. I do need to say enough to show that there is still point in being concerned with morality(n) even after their criticisms. To do this, it is important to distinguish criticism of morality(n) itself - that is, of the institution or practice - from criticisms of philosophers' interpretations of morality. (Note that the last word of the previous sentence is *not* 'morality(n)'.) It is explicit in Mackie's account of morality(n), and is implicit in the label itself, that morality(n) is not the whole of morality, since

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6 There is certainly a question as to why it should be particularly *human* interests which morality protects or promotes; I shall come back to this in Chapter 12.

there is also what Mackie calls 'morality in the broad sense'. So, at least on Mackie's interpretation, any philosopher who offers what is in effect an account of morality(n), as an account of morality *tout court*, is mistaken. Clearly, to take an over-narrow view of something that needs to be understood in all its breadth and richness, is to take a distorted view of the phenomena; but to take a narrow view of what is in fact broad, is not the same as to take an accurate view of something which is in fact narrow. Once we make this distinction, between a narrow interpretation of morality, and an interpretation of morality-in-the-narrow-sense, we can see that a concern with morality(n) can quite properly survive much of Williams' and Taylor's critiques.

Writers such as Mackie are saying that within the whole field of what he calls morality in the broad sense we can distinguish a particular institution, or practice, or way of thinking, which can be described as morality(n). Writers such as Williams and Taylor are not disputing that. Indeed Williams explicitly distinguishes what he calls 'morality' from the broader area of concern which is roughly what Mackie calls 'morality in the broad sense' and which Williams labels 'the ethical';[7] and some years later Williams (1995, p. 246) himself uses the phrase 'morality in the narrow sense' for what he called in 1985 'the peculiar institution'. Williams and Taylor are not disputing the existence of morality(n). A large part of what they are doing is criticising the mistaken philosophical interpretation which sees morality(n) as being the whole of the relevant area of concern. But they are also criticising the way that morality(n) has itself been interpreted by philosophers (and in doing so they are, of course, acknowledging its existence).

Thus Williams in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* criticises the interpretation of morality(n) which gives a particular kind of centrality to obligation. Roughly, morality(n) on the interpretation Williams is criticising is a Kantian morality. He acknowledges that utilitarianism can share some of the same features (p.178). I take

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[7] There is, however, at least one important difference between Mackie's 'morality in the broad sense and Williams' 'ethics' or 'the ethical'; that is, that Mackie considers morality, even in the broad sense, to be 'a body of principles'.

this to imply that a less Kantian, much more utilitarian, interpretation of morality(n) is a possibility. At times, while acknowledging the existence of morality(n), Williams seems to be saying that we would be better off without it. In his 1995 collection, he seems to me to be taking a somewhat softer line. I find it significant, for instance, that in his essay in that volume on what would normally be called 'professional ethics', he uses the term 'professional morality'. This may well be because he realised that, having defined ethics as the very broad area of thought about how one should live one's life, he could hardly use the same term of something intended to apply within strict professional limits. In any case, the sense of the term 'morality' in the phrase 'professional morality' does seem to be that of 'morality(n)'.

To turn to Taylor, in *Sources of the Self* (1989b, p. 3) he complains that

'much contemporary moral philosophy.... has given such a narrow focus to morality that some of the critical connections I want to draw here are incomprehensible in its terms..... This philosophy has accredited a cramped and truncated view of morality in a narrow sense, as well as of the whole range of issues involved in the attempt to live the best possible life.....' .

Here Taylor appears to be acknowledging that there is such a thing as morality(n), in contradistinction to the broader field (however that is to be labelled), while also saying that philosophical interpretations even of morality(n) are *too* narrow.

Two more examples from recent moral philosophy. Griffin (1996 p.79) explicitly treats ethics as the broader field which includes both morality and prudence, and it seems fair to interpret morality here as morality(n). This makes the whole situation appear clear-cut (even though Griffin has spoken earlier in the book of the interpenetration of prudence and morality). Perhaps to Taylor and Williams Griffin's treatment might seem rather shallow in its clear-cutness; no doubt this is partly a matter of

style.[8] Slote (1992) is closer to Williams in treating ethics as a broad field of evaluation, wider than prudential, but not confined to morality in either its utilitarian, Kantian or common-sense forms. But there is no consistency of terminology across writers; nor, probably, is there likely to be.[9]

Taylor, in *Sources of the Self*, acknowledges that 'morality' can be and often is defined purely in terms of respect for and obligation towards others, and goes on

'If we adopt this definition, then we have to allow that there are other questions beyond the moral which are of central concern to us, and which bring strong evaluation into play'. (*ibid.*)

These 'other questions beyond the moral' are the questions which Williams labels ethical, but which Taylor himself in *Sources of the Self* continues to refer to as moral (in other words, he does not himself adopt the possible narrow definition, but continues to use 'moral' in a broad sense). Later, Taylor (1995) appears to endorse Williams's terminology, but as Williams (1995 p. 241) himself says 'The suggestion that we might use the words in this way has hardly, as yet, swept all before it, and it no doubt has its own powers to mislead'. The editors of *TRAW*, expressing a general suspicion of systematic theory in relation to moral education, say 'For similar reasons, and in line with ordinary usage, we have avoided systematic differentiation between 'morality' and 'ethics' in this book' (p. x). ('Avoided' suggests that, but for this deliberate intent, they might have slipped into systematic differentiation; but avoiding that is easy; it is maintaining it that is difficult.)

Another complication which interacts with that of terminology is that the distinction between the phenomena and interpretations of the phenomena is not sharp. If there were no moral philosophers,

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8 In some respects Griffin is still an Oxford philosopher of the old school; a point recognised in the review of his *Value Judgement* by A. W. Price (*Philosophical Books* 39, 1, 1998), quoted on the back cover of the paperback.

9 Bauman (1993, p.21) for instance, uses the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' to mark a different distinction.

then indeed there would be no technically *philosophical* interpretations of morality, narrow or broad. But interpretations are written into the phenomena. This is much of the burden of Williams' discussion of the peculiar institution in Chapter 10 of *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, and when Taylor says 'morality can be, of course, and often is, defined purely in terms of respect for others. The category of the moral is thought to encompass just our obligations to other people.' (*Sources of the Self* p.14) he is (as I read him) referring to the thought of many ordinary people in modern cultures, not just the philosophers.

This means that another kind of criticism is open to writers like Williams and Taylor. Besides criticising (a) the philosophers who treat morality(n) as if it were the whole of the relevant area of concern, and (b) the philosophers who misrepresent morality(n), they can also be criticising (c) morality(n) itself for inherently working with mistaken interpretations. This kind of criticism goes back at least to Marx.[10] As Lukes (1985) and many others have noted, Marx was highly critical of morality, if this was understood as the 'official' morality of his day (and earlier). This was what Lukes describes as 'the morality of *Recht*'; and Lukes explicitly treats this as similar to Mackie's morality(n) (*ibid.* p. 31). Morality in this sense was to Marx inherently ideological, in other words, it incorporated - independently of philosophers coming onto the scene - understandings which were false but which, as a matter of false consciousness, could not be seen as false: had morality not been experienced as putting objective, universal constraints on people, it would not have been able to serve its actual social function, which was to protect the existing structure of social relations.

Williams, while dissociating himself from a vulgar Marxist interpretation (1985 pp. 195-6), also believes that 'morality, the peculiar institution' rests on an illusion - which is, at least in part, that morality is somehow insulated from luck (see also Williams 1995). It is not clear, however, that morality(n) necessarily has to be subject to the interpretations that Marx or Williams, or any

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10 I used Marx in my exposition of criticisms of morality in *TAV* p.66.

other particular theorist, read into it. In this sense, such writers are giving us a particular, still narrower, reading of morality(n). (Morality(n^2), so to speak).

It seems to me that morality(n) does not have to rest on an illusion. It should be possible for people to be fully conscious of the nature of morality(n), and still take it seriously. But to try to bring this about is an educational task (to be addressed here chiefly in Part IV).

Chapter Five
The language(s) of virtues

The languages of morality(n)

If there is to be a convergence in public understanding on a conception of morality in the narrow sense, there has to be a way of talking about that morality and expressing its content which can be both readily understood and widely adopted.

If one puts weight on the analogy between morality(n) and law, one might expect morality(n) to be unpacked in a language of norms, that is, of prescriptions setting out what people are to do or not to do. This is, indeed, the kind of language adopted by the SCAA Forum in its list of statements beginning 'we should...'. . This fact is not, of course, an argument in itself. There are other possible kinds of language in which morality(n) could be articulated. In this and the following chapter, and Appendix 4, I want to look at other possibilities.

There seem to be two main possibilities to be considered before returning (as I shall) to the rather undifferentiated idea of a language of norms. First, there is a possibility which tries in a sense to stay within a language of norms but to make this language more specific; it tries to talk purely in terms of rights. Then, there is a possibility which tries to move outside a language of norms altogether, by talking not about what people are to do or not to do, but about personal qualities: a language of virtues. Because the relationship between a language of norms and a language of virtues raises, to my mind, the most interesting issues (and also the ones most pertinent in relation to the recent literature) I shall concentrate on this in the main body of my argument. But it may also be constructive to consider the possibilities of a language consisting wholly of rights-talk; I shall do this in Appendix 4.

First, it is worth considering what kind of question it is that we are asking in wondering what kind of language is appropriate for articulating morality(n). Is it a metaethical question about the

fundamental nature of morality: about whether morality is constituted by rights, or by virtues, or by something else? I think it is not that kind of question. I have already characterised morality(n) as itself subserving certain values, where these values are human interests (though I have also acknowledged that this raises a question about the moral status of non-human interests). The question, then, about the language in which to articulate morality(n) is a question about what kind of language will best enable morality(n) to fulfil its function; and in answering this question it is appropriate to consider such points as that the language in which we articulate morality(n) has to be one which is widely intelligible, which can be communicated and used in educational contexts, and so on.

Seeing the question in this way also enables us to see that the candidates I have suggested are unlikely to be mutually exclusive. The actual language that we do use in moral discourse does contain both mention of rights (often using that word) and mention of virtues (usually not, outside philosophy, using that word), as well as mention of heterogeneous kinds of norms. It would need a special argument to show why, for purposes of achieving and promoting a shared public understanding of morality(n), some restriction should be imposed on the kind of language to be used.

Nevertheless, in public contexts there is certainly room for differences in emphasis. And in educational discourse especially, there are deliberate decisions to be made about where to put the emphasis, what kind of language to use and to encourage others to use. It is still, then, sensible to look at what there is to be said for and against the different kinds of language I have mentioned.

Can morality(n) use a language of virtues?

Given that we are looking for some sort of public way of talking - which will also provide a vocabulary in which people do much of their own thinking - which will serve the functions of morality(n), it is worth considering whether talk about virtues could serve this function. Law, of course, does not for the most part say 'be kind'

or 'be honest'; for the most part it lays down rather concrete prescriptions as to what is to be done or (more typically) not done. But if morality(n) shares its function with law, that does not by itself mean that it must share its form. In *The Object of Morality*, Warnock (1971), whose account of morality is rightly construed by Mackie as an account of morality(n)[1], criticises the idea that rules are basic to morality and argues instead for virtues as basic.[2] This is enough to show that the distinction between morality(n) and the wider sphere (however it is designated) is not the same as the distinction between a morality of rules and a morality of virtues. Though it would be true to say that most proponents in recent years (roughly, since MacIntyre's *After Virtue*) of what has come to be known as 'virtue ethics' are aiming at a characterisation of the wider sphere rather than of morality(n), a morality or ethics of virtues can itself come in narrow or wide versions.

Mackie (1977 p. 106) defines morality(n) as follows: 'In the narrow sense, a morality is a system of a particular sort of constraints on conduct - ones whose central task is to protect the interests of persons other than the agent and which present themselves to an agent as checks on his natural inclinations or spontaneous tendencies to act.' It is perfectly possible to interpret virtues as functioning as such checks; this is what Warnock does, and it was also a major element, for instance, of a rather seminal paper on virtues by Philippa Foot: 'they are corrective, each one standing at a point at which there is some temptation to be resisted or deficiency of motivation to be made good' (1978, p. 8). On such a basis, it is possible for an account of virtues to be offered as an account of morality(n); the qualities picked out as virtues will be ones which are seen as minimally necessary as a basis for life in society.

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1 This is shown by the rationale that Warnock gives for morality; and by the fact that he makes a sharp distinction between the topic of morality and that of 'the Good Life' (e.g. *ibid.* p.92),

2 In Chapter 7 I shall agree with at least one of Warnock's points about rules.

Why might it be thought that a language of virtues is suitable, not only for the broader area of concern, but also for serving the function of morality(n)? Someone might think this on the basis of an argument that dispositions are basic to morality, which is the position taken by Warnock. A similar general point, though not specifically in relation to morality(n), is argued by Williams (1987), in a passage which Patricia White (1996) quotes at the beginning of her exploration of civic virtues. However, it does not follow from a recognition that dispositions are fundamental that a language of dispositions is the best language in which to talk about morality(n), especially where we have public understanding in mind. This would be a little like arguing that because chemical changes in cells are fundamental in human health and fitness, the language of biochemistry is the best language for public health policy. But this is certainly not an exact analogy. Instead of analogy, we need to think directly about the job that a public language of evaluation has to do, and what kind of language is suited to this job.

A first point is that when we think about a language of virtues as a public language, our focus is rather different from the focus of the writers who have been arguing recently for conceiving of moral education as the development of virtue. An upbringing which develops virtues in individuals does not by in itself constitute an education for a shared public conception of morality. One of the features of virtue ethics, as a strand within the literature of moral philosophy, is that it puts rather more weight than do rule-and-principle based theories on tacit elements of morality.[3] For some purposes, for instance in thinking about the moral upbringing of one child by its parents, this emphasis on the tacit is important. Early moral upbringing may be to a considerable extent a matter of the child learning by example with little having to be verbalised at a general and abstract level - 'abstract' in the sense of being abstracted from the particular circumstances. And so it is possible, at least to a degree, for a child to grow up with the virtues, say, of consideration and

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[3] The work of Peters, of which I shall say more below, especially in Chapters 8 and 9, is something of an exception.

sensitivity to others, without actually having the terms 'consideration' and 'sensitivity' in his or her vocabulary.

But for a mass education system hoping to promote a shared morality, verbalisation is inevitable, as regards both means and ends. As regards means, even if the attempt to develop certain virtues in pupils were to be carried out in ways that did not involve actually talking to the pupils about the virtues, the teachers would need to have a way of articulating amongst themselves what they were doing, and any educationalists or public bodies concerned with education would need a language in which to talk to teachers about their task.

Then as regards ends, a shared morality requires that citizens have a common language in which they can talk about matters of morality: about what kind of moral education they are going to give their children, about the kind of behaviour they expect from each other, and about public moral problems. Since possessing a virtue does not necessarily mean that one can oneself articulate it, then even if we could suppose that across a modern diverse society all citizens developed certain virtues in common, this would not by itself mean that they had a shared language of moral evaluation. To some degree this point is recognised, for instance, by Patricia White (1996 p. 6) when she argues that as well as fostering dispositions (which might by itself seem manipulative) education needs to promote understanding of the dispositions. But she does not in my view go far enough in asking whether this understanding, even when shared, provides a suitable language for public discussion of morality and moral issues.

There are several reasons for a degree of caution about this. Most pragmatically, consideration of the language to be used in education has to start, not with a clean slate, but from where we are now. And where we are now is that while words for virtues and their negative counterparts - what some philosophers have called 'thick' terms of moral evaluation, such as 'generous', 'decent', 'caring', 'self-centred', 'dishonest' and the like - are very common in everyday discourse, reflection on such qualities, and

their labelling by a general term such as 'virtues' - let alone a shared conception of what kind of quality a virtue is - are not everyday parts of ordinary discourse.

This may sometimes be forgotten now by moral philosophers and philosophers of education, since in recent years the word 'virtue' has come into common use in these circles. This does not mean that it would be easy to get the general public to make explicit use of the notion of virtues. The notion of a virtue to the layperson can carry a connotation of an ideal, even of saintliness, that is, of a quality which could hardly serve as an everyday standard of evaluation or a public expectation.[4]

Some of the things which philosophers have said about virtues would be liable to strengthen this impression of a virtue as something exceptional (if the general public were to read works of academic philosophy). Thus Hursthouse says (referring to a woman because she is discussing abortion, but making it clear that she intends the gist of her remarks to apply to males also):

> The virtuous woman (which here of course does not mean simply 'chaste woman' but 'woman with the virtues') has such character traits as strength, independence, resoluteness, decisiveness, self-confidence, responsibility, serious-mindedness, and self-determination.....' (1997 p.235)

If the language of virtues is to be understood as putting forward such an ideal (a 'paragon of virtue', in a phrase which significantly seems still to be in the everyday language), it may well be widely seen as barely relevant to ordinary mortals. No doubt, however, this is partly a matter of style; Patricia White(1996) uses the language of virtues without giving the impression that being virtuous would be beyond the ordinary citizen of a democracy. And if there are good arguments for trying to promote a language

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4 I have only anecdotal evidence. But in the first draft of a glossary of terms which I was asked to prepare for the SCAA Forum I included the term 'virtue'. The teachers in the group with which I discussed the draft saw no point in including this term in something intended to be usable in schools; they did not see the idea of a virtue as being relevant to the standards expected of students in schools.

of virtues as a language of common currency and moral reflection and debate, then education will have to take on this task, even if it does mean, over a generation or so, changing the way people talk.

A thin language of virtues

There are problems, though, about which language of virtues we are to choose - for there is more than one. While philosophers often refer to the words for virtues as 'thick' terms of evaluation, there are many possible, overlapping, languages of virtues, consisting of different sets of virtue terms; and there is also at least one possible language of virtues, with a certain plausibility, which does not consist of 'thick' terms at all, but of rather thin ones, and only a few of them. I shall consider this 'thin' language of virtues first, before looking at thicker ones.

The 'thin' language of virtues which I have in mind is that used by Warnock (1971). In his own account of morality he introduces what I have called elsewhere (*TAV* p. 42) 'an all-purpose set of virtues': - non-maleficence, beneficence, fairness and non-deception. He may well be right that these are the basic dispositions people need to have if human affairs are to go better than they would in the absence of morality. But he does not attempt, as many other writers on virtues have, to cash out these dispositions in terms of underlying qualities of character. To refer to these virtues seems to be little different, in its practical effect, from referring to the norms 'don't cause harm', 'do good', 'be fair' and 'don't deceive' - and so the language remains thin. These four virtues of Warnock's in themselves seem to go little way in enabling people to guide their conduct and organise their affairs in society.

Recall that the function of morality(n) is partly one of enabling co-operation and co-ordination.[5] Warnock's basic virtues might be sufficient to overcome some self-interested motivations, and even to motivate co-operation, but will not by themselves give a sufficiently substantial form to co-ordination. To do that, norms

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5 On this point cf. Griffin (1996) p.93, with particular reference to morality, and using the terminology of 'norms'; Campbell (1983) Ch. 3, with particular reference to law, and using the terminology of 'rules'.

appear to be needed. Fairness is presumably close to Hume's artificial virtue of justice, but justice as a virtue needs standards of justice; that is, the just person, who is sensitive to injustice and strives to be just, still needs some standards by which to judge what is just. Non-deception is a disposition which Warnock stretches to account for the obligation to keep one's promises, but an account of that in terms of the norms of the practice and the underlying function of the practice seems more natural. As for non-maleficence and beneficence, I shall say a little more about them in the next chapter.

In short, though Warnock speaks of virtues, he is not really propounding (what would now be counted as) a 'virtue ethics' at all.[6] Many writers have been willing to speak of virtues and to recognise their importance; but for some, the notion of a virtue has been secondary to, and parasitic on, certain norms. That is to say, virtues have sometimes been defined just as the dispositions to adhere to certain norms (Warnock himself comes close to this: *ibid.* p. 86). Honesty will be the disposition to adhere to norms of truth-telling, benevolence the disposition to adhere to norms of helping others, and so on. In this way of talking the reference to virtues becomes just a rhetorical variation on talking directly in terms of norms; it says nothing distinctive about character or motivation.

Three kinds of thickness

What of the thicker languages of virtues? These can actually differ from a thin language like Warnock's in more than one way; there are at least three relevant dimensions of 'thickness'. First, the meaning of each virtue-term in the language will be 'thick': to ascribe benevolence to someone, for instance, will not be just to say that the person has a tendency to help others. It will be to say something about the person's character. Different theorists will unpack just what it is saying in somewhat different ways, but something like the following would be fairly widely agreed. The benevolent person will differ from the non-benevolent first in

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6 A conclusion supported by the fact that Warnock is rarely referred to in philosophical debate on virtues in the last fifteen years or so.

what he or she notices: she will notice when other people are in need of comfort or help, where another person might not notice at all. Then, the benevolent person will feel differently from the non-benevolent; she will be pained at the other's suffering and pleased at the other's well-being, where a non-benevolent person might be indifferent either way (while a sadistic person might be pleased at the other's suffering). Thirdly, the benevolent person will be moved to act where the non-benevolent person would not be; the benevolent person's feelings will not be inert. If she felt upset by the other's suffering and wished she could help - and if situations like this happened again and again - but she never actually did anything to help, then she would not be benevolent.

This begins to show the way in which terms like 'benevolence', and other virtue terms, are 'thick'. There is much more to be said about what the virtues involve, but to some extent it has to be said for each virtue one by one. I shall say a little more about one or two particular qualities in the next chapter when I consider how the widespread public concern about violence might be addressed in virtue-language.

A second dimension in which a language of virtues may differ from Warnock's is in simply containing a larger vocabulary of virtue terms. Suppose virtues are listed in a glossary; then Warnock's glossary of moral virtues would be the thinnest of leaflets, but the Aristotelian or the Christian glossaries would be thick pamphlets (with important differences between them); and a glossary of all the words in English which could be the names of virtues would be a substantial volume.

The fact that there could be these different glossaries - in effect, different, though overlapping, languages of virtues - creates problems for the use of a language of virtues as a public language of discourse. Which glossary is to be used, in a plural society? The thinnest available, which could provide a *lingua franca* of virtues? But Warnock's is surely so thin that it brings us little benefit from using a language of virtues at all; it seems to enable us to say little or nothing that could not be said in a language of

norms. Notice, for instance, that Warnock's set of moral virtues does not even contain courage, one of the qualities most often in the past, across many traditions, considered to be a virtue. Actually, Warnock deliberately excludes courage from his list of *moral* virtues, while recognising that it is a virtue of a kind (*ibid.*, p. 78). For MacIntyre (1981, p. 179), in contrast, courage is one of three virtues (the others being truthfulness and justice) which will be essential for the pursuit of any human practice. If we recognise that glossaries of virtues might be subdivided, into sections headed 'moral' and 'other', or 'central' and 'minor', or whatever, then there will be still more variation between one glossary and another; and even where two glossaries coincide in the terms they include, they may differ in their definitions because they draw on understandings derived from different traditions.

If there is to be public agreement on some set of virtues within a plural society, that agreement must not be on a glossary which is that of a specific culture or tradition; at the same time the agreement must extend far enough to facilitate at least some workable level of agreement on the application of particular terms. One way of trying to find agreement on a common glossary would be to work from some single underlying rationale which would tell us which qualities are to be counted as virtues. But this is another matter on which we find no agreement among theorists. To some, there has to be something intuitively admirable about a virtue, in a way that is perhaps more a matter of aesthetic than of moral evaluation (e.g. Slote 1992). To others, a virtue can be any personal quality which contributes to general human well-being (essentially an utilitarian identification of virtues, e.g. Driver 1996). To others again, a quality is not to be counted as a virtue unless it tends towards the good of *its possessor* (Philippa Foot held this view at one time). Many now would say that to be counted as a virtue a quality must contribute to human *flourishing* or *the good life*, but will interpret that notion in some non-utilitarian way.[7]

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[7] MacIntyre (1981) has his own way of picking out the qualities that are virtues - a way that requires reference to the interrelated concepts of practice, narrative and tradition. Though MacIntyre may still be, after

Here we come to yet a third way in which languages of virtues can be thicker than Warnock's minimal one. A minimal language of virtues will pick out qualities which can be expected to contribute to human good, where that good is interpreted in way which we could expect everyone across a plural society to agree on. This will be an agreement on the level of Rawls' (1972) 'thin theory of the good'. But actual languages of virtues have seen the qualities they pick out as contributing to human flourishing, where this is interpreted in some particular, 'thick', way. Thus the Christian and Aristotelian glossaries of virtues were different largely because their conceptions of human flourishing were different. A language of virtues rooted in a particular tradition with its thick notion of flourishing is a much richer language; but by the same token it is a language for talking about morality, or ethics, in the broader sense, not about morality(n).

Virtues and public agreement

One last point, for this chapter, concerns what would follow from public agreement on a list of virtues, even if that were achieved. There are two kinds of agreement that people can have on norms for conduct; they can agree that certain norms are the ones to be followed; and they can also personally agree to, that is, commit themselves to, follow the norms. Agreement of the first kind gives a common reference point by which actions and policies can be evaluated - a matter I shall return to in Chapter 9. Does agreement on a list of virtues do the same?

It has been a common complaint against virtue ethics that it does not give guidance on conduct where there is doubt about what should be done. According to Louden (1997 p. 206):

Aristotle, the most widely cited writer in contemporary virtue ethics, it is not clear that many writers actually follow his account in all its details. A good corrective to confidence that we know how to use the language of virtues would be a perusal of three recent philosophical collections on virtue ethics: Crisp & Slote (1997), Crisp (1996), and Statman (1997). These collections show that even philosophers who see themselves as contributing to virtue ethics are by no means agreed on what makes a quality a virtue.

'Owing to the very nature of the moral virtues, there is .... a very limited amount of advice on moral quandaries that one can reasonably expect from the virtue-oriented approach. We ought, of course, to do what the virtuous person would do, but it is not always easy to fathom what the hypothetical moral exemplar would do were he in our shoes.'

So far as individual behaviour is concerned, this may be too harsh. Hursthouse in several articles (1995, 1996, 1997) has shown that 'doing what the virtuous person would do' does go further than one might think in giving one guidance. But she does not go far in considering whether it can guide citizens in public quandaries. Recall that MacIntyre(1981) begins *After Virtue* by calling attention to interminable disagreement over issues such as abortion and nuclear deterrence. His arguments in that book do nothing to show (and he would not claim that they do) that talking in terms of virtues, in itself, would enable the citizens of a modern, plural, liberal democracy to resolve such issues. It is the lack of a shared tradition, not the fact of using a language of norms rather than a language of virtues, that keeps the disagreements irresolvable.[8]

Then there is the second kind of agreement: agreeing to (be bound by) certain norms in the sense of agreeing to (try to) follow them. If I agree with you, and you with me, that we will both follow certain rules, we are doing more than agreeing that it would be a good thing if we both acted in such-and-such a way. We are committing ourselves to act in this way, and we are doing this mutually, so that each of us knows that the other expects us to act in this way. We have each made a commitment to the other, and will not want to be seen as going back on it. This gives each of us an additional motivation for so acting, over and above our thinking that it would be a good thing if we both did so. The equivalent understanding between citizens, who agree to follow certain norms, will be important when we consider in Chapter 11 what kind of authority morality(n) can have.

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8 A point which becomes all the clearer in MacIntyre's later writings.

Is there an equivalent in the language of virtues? What could correspond to each of us agreeing to act in a certain way? That each of us agrees to be virtuous? That would leave a great deal open to interpretation, and would raise the problem highlighted by the quotation from Hursthouse above: just how high a standard are people to be taken as setting for themselves?

The considerations I have brought forward in this chapter do, perhaps, show that some writers[9] have been rather too sanguine in supposing that somehow talking about virtues rather than talking about rules and principles is going to show us how to get moral education right. The likelihood seems to be that either a language of virtues is going to be a thin one which does not enable us to do anything we could not do with a language of norms, or that it is going to be a thick one, in which case its very thickness will disqualify it as a language for morality in the narrow sense. Nevertheless the points considered in this chapter do not constitute a knock-down argument against a language of virtues as a public language of moral evaluation. It is possible that someone will still develop a language of virtues that will serve the purposes of public moral discourse.[10]

Since the arguments of this chapter have been at a rather high level of generality, it might be helpful to have some more concrete illustration of the sorts of job that a language of virtues can, or cannot, do. To provide this illustration I shall take a chapter to look at a particular matter which is clearly of public moral concern - violence[11] - and in the remainder of the thesis I shall occasionally again use violence as an example.

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9 See, for example, the reference to Cox in Chapter 7 below.

10 The recent writings of Patricia White could be read as an exercise in this direction.

11 In doing this I shall be borrowing from a more extended discussion in *Values, Virtues and Violence.*

Chapter Six
Violence and languages of morality(n)

The comparison so far between different languages of evaluation may have given the impression that there are clear-cut distinctions between the languages. A first point that can be illustrated by considering the ways we talk about violence is that elements of the same vocabulary can be shared by different sorts of moral language. Consider the expression: 'John can be rather violent'. Out of context, it is ambiguous. It can mean that John, though normally peaceable, occasionally behaves violently. His acquaintances do not expect him to behave this way; indeed when he does, they recognise this behaviour as being out of character. Here 'violent' picks out a type of action; it does not refer to an underlying trait of character. But the same phrase could also mean that John is a violent person; 'violent' can be describing him, not just as occasional action of his. It can be ascribing a deficiency of character, a vice, to him. So the phrase could be uttered by someone whose language of moral evaluation is confined to the evaluation of acts, but it could also be part of a language of virtues.

If the word 'violent' can itself figure in both a language of norms and a language of virtues, it is also true more generally that we can (and do) use both sorts of language in talking about violence - not least in public contexts. The virtue language that is commonly used about violence is not a thin one of Warnock's type; let me make this point first before turning to the richer kinds of language that we may actually use.

In Warnock's vocabulary, the virtues which have a fairly direct bearing on violence are non-maleficence and beneficence. On the minimal assumption that violence does generally cause pain or harm, or at least has a tendency to do so, people with the virtue of non-maleficence would not be violent. For non-maleficence, in Warnock's terms, is just the disposition to refrain from (deliberate, unjustified) maleficence. But this shows up the thinness of the language, in several ways. For one, it puts all the weight on

whether someone sees the causing of certain harm as unjustified; it does not say that non-maleficence is the disposition to avoid causing any harm at all. The person who has the virtue of non-maleficence, then, must have some basis for seeing (or 'judging', where the latter term suggests a greater degree of explicit thought) whether the causing of certain harm would be unjustified. And that is the sort of judgement we generally make by reference to norms.

This thin language of virtues, too, does nothing to help us distinguish violence from other forms of maleficence, or to see what, if anything, is specially bad about violence. Though Warnock himself rejects utilitarianism, non-maleficence and its positive counterpart beneficence are the virtues that one would expect to be central to utilitarianism. Non-maleficence and beneficence need, if they are to be put into operation, some understanding of what counts as harm and benefit, just as does utilitarianism; they need a degree of intersubjective understanding of harm and benefit such as might be supplied by shared norms. This reference to harm and benefit is a reference to consequences, and thus turns attention away from motivation and intention. Thus if the consequences overall of a certain way of organising a school appear as bad as the consequences of a physical attack by one person on another, the beneficent person will see the need to avoid both sorts of consequence. Like the utilitarian, he or she may see reason for counting the school organisation as a case of 'systemic violence'.[1] If we want to find reasons for counting physical violence (or perhaps physical and in certain respects psychological violence) as in some way morally distinctive, we will not find it by using a thin language of virtues like Warnock's.

Relativity of virtues

Let's turn, then, to thicker languages of virtues in relation to violence. We immediately have to recall that there is more than

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1 Epp & Watkinson (1996). In this chapter I use the notion of violence as if it were unproblematic. In fact it is not; in *VVV* I have given some attention to controversy over what does or does not count as violence; see also Appendix 5 below.

one thick language of virtues; and if part of the function of morality(n) is to reduce conflict and violence, some languages of virtues, such as the language of martial valour in heroic societies (cf. MacIntyre 1981 Ch. 10), would hardly tend to fulfil this function. Though none of us now lives in an heroic society, we do, in a plural society, inherit different traditions of virtues. Different religions and different cultures do not necessarily agree on circumstances in which the resort to violence (in response, say, to violence from another) is admirable or deplorable. Turning the other cheek can be admirable moral courage to one and reprehensible timidity or servility to another; hitting back can be reprehensible irascibility or admirable manliness (some parts of virtue language are gender-specific). Using a language of virtues to talk about violence and public responses to violence is by no means unproblematic.

It is not only that as a culture we are heirs to a number of traditions; it is also that there can be subcultures within a culture, and subcultures will not necessarily have the same glossary of virtues as the main culture. Some sociologists (e.g. Wolfgang 1977 pp. 37-38) have spoken of a 'subculture of violence' in which qualities such as machismo, quickness in responding to aggression with aggression, 'hardness' (cf. Schostak 1986), which in mainstream culture or different subcultures might be vices, are treated as virtues.

If in relation to violence different qualities may be recognised as virtues in different cultures and subcultures, we can also recognise different virtues for different roles. Writers on professional ethics, influenced by the wider turn in moral philosophy towards virtue ethics, have begun to discuss, for example, the virtues of nurses. What of the virtues of soldiers? Annette Baier (1997, p. 269) writes that 'the easy willingness to go out and kill when ordered to do so by authorities' does not seem to her 'to be a character trait a decent morality will encourage by labelling it a virtue'. That may be so, but a society may nevertheless consider that it needs people with that willingness, and to that extent it may have to recognise that this

trait is a virtue in soldiers. (Whether a decent liberal society can recognise this is one of Baier's questions; we can add the question whether it is a trait that a decent liberal society could encourage through education; if not, we must expect the training of young persons as soldiers to be in some tension with the kind of general education those same persons will have experienced.)

In relation to violence, then, a society speaking a language of virtues may have to accept a certain relativity within that language. It is also possible that the appropriateness of different kinds of language of evaluation is relative to rather different concerns that we may have in our evaluation. Let me illustrate this by reference to a term which very commonly features in virtue-talk about violence (though not part of Warnock's thin language of virtues) - 'cowardice'.

When politicians have condemned politically-motivated bombings in Northern Ireland, more often than not at least one description under which the act is condemned is that it is 'cowardly'. Although calling an act cowardly is describing the *act*, not directly the person doing it, the description refers to the motivation of the action and through that to the character of the agent (whereas the description of an act as violent will not necessarily refer to character). The act is being described as the kind of act a cowardly person would do, and implicitly as the kind of act *only* a cowardly person would do.

Many of us (I say 'of us' because the readers of works like this are not in general going to be among the action heroes of this world), even if we were convinced that some political cause justified the planting of bombs, might be too timid to carry this out. Perhaps even that sort of action requires some degree of courage; the terrorists face some personal risk of injury or capture. They could have given up their cause and stayed at home, which would not have been a display of courage.

This is not at all intended as a defence of terrorist bombing. Rather it suggests that a language of virtues is not sufficient for

the evaluation of acts of violence. As Williams (1993 p. 92) remarks in a quite different context, 'the action stands between the inner world of disposition, feeling and decision and an outer world of harm and wrong. *What I have done* points in one direction towards what has happened to others, in another direction to what I am'. The labelling of an act as cowardly points to what the agent is, but that need not exhaust the evaluation of the act.[2] What is wrong with planting a car bomb in a crowded shopping centre? To my mind what is wrong with this is that people are going to be - or are put in danger of being - killed or maimed, and other people as a result are going to be left bereaved and grieving. (Some would add to this description that the people are 'innocent' - but that hardly seems to me to be the central point either.) Isn't *that* why the act should be condemned? Of how much moment is it that the action is cowardly? To apply that label to it seems to be, not so much to condemn the atrocity, as to utter a personal insult to the perpetrator. Even if the insult is richly deserved, it still seems to me rather beside the point.

But here I am expressing my own reactions and, significantly, would not expect everyone to agree with me. I can believe that for some people the thought 'What kind of person could do that?' really does point to what is most horrible about the action. To me, what is most horrible about it is the pain and suffering the action causes.[3] Most of us, I imagine, are capable of making both kinds of evaluation, but we may differ in our tendency to make one or the other, or in which we give priority to.

I have no wish to deny the richness of the languages of evaluation which our vocabulary and our inherited ways of thinking make available to us. Indeed I would argue that a person's education would be deficient if it left the person able to operate only with

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2 So I am basically agreeing with Mill's distinction between the morality of the act and the worth of the agent (*Utilitarianism* Ch. 2).

3 I recognise that the consequences of the bombing might in themselves be similar to the accidental explosion of a gas main or even to the consequences of an earthquake. And I recognise that the fact that the consequences of the bombing stem from the deliberate action of a human being does make the whole event more horrible. But how much more?

some narrow range of evaluative terms. It is worth noting too that the different theoretical accounts of morality and ethics which philosophers have developed do to a considerable extent reflect the different languages of evaluation which we have. To some of us it is the consequences of the bombing which constitute the real horror of it. If we are philosophers, it is likely to be consequentialist schemes that we develop. To others of us, it is the character - as some would say, the evil character - of the perpetrators that is the real horror. The philosophers within this school of thought will develop forms of virtue ethics. That is no doubt an over-simplification, but it does seem to me that the most important distinction to be drawn within contemporary debate between virtue ethics and its rivals is that - while no view need deny that we can and do evaluate both actions and agents - different approaches give the priority to the different kinds of evaluation.

Perhaps indeed we should be pluralist about our forms of evaluation and even about our philosophical approaches to ethics, if these reflect different languages of evaluation. When we are asking what kind of evaluative language can best serve the public purposes of morality in the narrow sense (especially, for the moment, the limitation of violence), the considerations of the last few paragraphs show some of the problems in using a language of virtues to pick out publicly actions or patterns of behaviour that are going to be condemned. We need also to use a language which refers to the nature of actions and their consequences for others - which is what a language of norms mostly - though not exclusively - does.

It is equally possible to argue the other way round: that a language referring to the nature of actions and their consequences is not sufficient, if we are interested in limiting conflict and violence. Think of a teacher who wants to prevent any violence in the classroom. She may well think it important that norms against violence should be recognised in the classroom.[4] But she may also

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4 Such norms will not necessarily take the form 'don't be violent'. There is, for instance, a not uncommon norm in primary classrooms

recognise that, if the culture of the classroom and the attitudes of individuals within it are such as to make violence a possibility, then norms against violence may not by themselves prevent it. She will have to consider why some people sometimes resort to violence (or find themselves being violent).

One factor she will certainly have to consider is anger. Anger is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of violence, but it does have a special connection with it. As Midgley puts it, anger is 'the appropriate motive for attack - not that it must always lead to attack, nor that all attacks are due to it, but that it is the feeling which makes attack intelligible, even without extra background conditions' (1986, pp. 76-77)[5]. Where there is anger, it is natural to expect some sort of attacking behaviour (though it may be only verbal), though this is by no means inevitable; and if we ask why one person attacked another (physically or verbally), a reference to anger will generally be intelligible as part of an explanation, though it will need to be supplemented by some explanation of the anger itself. Though there are certainly other motivational factors which can lead to violence (there can, for instance, be violence calmly and calculatedly undertaken as a means to an end), in this discussion, making no claim to completeness, I shall concentrate on anger.

(cited by Skillen 1997 p.376): 'We keep our hands, feet and objects to ourselves'. See Appendix 5.

[5] The reader may expect some reference to aggression. But 'aggression' is one of those terms which, because of its ambiguities, tends to obfuscate rather than clarify. While in a biological context 'aggression' may be used of a certain sort of motivation, in much everyday discourse about human conduct, the term picks out a kind of behaviour - attacking behaviour - rather than any specific motive. There is no single necessary motivation, for instance, behind the aggression of one state against another. In this way the notion of aggression is rather like that of violence itself; violence too may be picked out by reference to motivation or by reference to other characteristics of action.
Where there is reference to motivation we might expect that the term 'aggressive' - partly because aggression can be associated with violence - would be uniformly negative in its evaluative tone. Yet 'aggressive' can function as a positive description in a language of virtues: to call a business executive aggressive is to praise him or her. Given the ambiguities around the notion of aggression, I shall concentrate here on anger.

When someone is angry, reference to a rule such as 'don't be violent' is not necessarily going to stop them being violent; and when someone is beginning to get angry, reference to a rule like 'don't lose your temper' is not necessarily going to stop their anger escalating. In such cases it would very often be better if the person concerned had not got angry at all; yet a rule that said simply 'don't get angry' would probably not be the right rule, since anger is not always bad, and may not always be within a person's control. And a rule which said 'always suppress your anger' would seem to many to be mistaken. The following, for instance, not only displays a not uncommon attitude towards anger, it also illustrates a suspicion of moral rules and of explicitly moral language of which I shall have more to say later.

'Children are taught that it's "wrong" to be seriously angry with others and to express that anger physically or verbally. The conflict over what they feel and what they are "supposed" to feel creates a sense of isolation as they move further and further away from their instinctual selves' (Leseho & Howard-Rose, 1994, p.8)

Without necessarily agreeing with all aspects of this view, we can recognise that there is something in the nature of anger that does make a language of norms, in isolation, inappropriate for dealing with it. We commonly think that anger is an emotion that can get out of control, and that it is when it does get out of control that it is especially likely to lead to violence. It would be possible in a language of norms to give only minimal recognition to this point. If we firmly insist on the rule 'don't be violent', then we could say that it matters little whether people get angry or not; what is important is that they do not actually behave violently. We can even say that it doesn't matter if you feel like hitting someone, so long as you don't actually hit them (perhaps instead you *say* 'I'm so angry, I feel like hitting you'; cf. Houghton, 1998, p.47). But a view which depends in this way on a sharp distinction between feeling and action can well seem over-sanguine. If part of the trouble with anger is that it can be difficult to control, and that it tends to lead to violence, it makes sense to look at ways of limiting anger in the first place. Since anger is an emotion which can motivate behaviour, and since some people seem to be more prone

to anger than others, this way of thinking is going to lead us into using a language of virtues.

Part of the problem with limiting ourselves, in contexts of personal violence, to a language of norms referring to outward behaviour is brought out by Larry May, in a passage in which he is considering the way that some men (this does mean *m e n*, not 'persons') try to excuse their violence by pleading that their anger or their sexual desire was too much for them.

'Morality should not be diminished when the going gets tough. Indeed, it is just at that point that morality should clearly come to view. Those people who are already inclined to act in a morally responsible manner do not have as much need for the social institutions that constitute morality's public expression. In a sense, the public sanctions that attach to morality are there for those who would not normally act in a morally responsible manner. Of course, they also play a role for everyone else, since few people are always inclined to do what they should do. But the main function of such public sanctions would be defeated if people thought that morality applied less to those who had a hard time following it.' (1998, p. 14)[6]

I take this to illustrate both that a morality of public norms, telling people not to act in certain ways, is important, and that it might be of little effect if people (and, where violence is concerned, males especially) could too easily excuse themselves from it by saying 'my anger [or sexual desire, or both] got the better of me'. If in at least some of these cases anger really does get the better of the perpetrator, this is in some sense a deficiency in the person concerned; in some sense he would be a better person if this didn't happen to him. Here we are beginning to talk the language of virtues. There is some virtue relevant to anger, and the person who has this virtue is a person whose anger will not be excessive, whatever happens.

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6 Some strands of feminist thought and research point to the possibility that males may be more inclined than are females to think in terms of a morality of norms which constrain 'natural' appetites. May's discussion suggests that males may be more in need of such a morality; or rather, that females may need such a morality in males.

The nature of the virtue relating to anger

How are we to characterise this virtue? One common answer is that given by John White in his contribution to *TRAW* (p.22): 'The virtue of temperance, which regulates our bodily appetites, or the virtue of self-control, which does he same for anger.... control the temptations, or inclinations, we all have when we are young to follow easier paths.'

I do not want to read too much into remarks made in passing. But notice how odd it would be if someone were to suggest (though I do not think White meant to) that but for the development of temperance all boys would grow up as rapists, or that but for the development of self-control all children would grow up subject to uncontrollable fits of anger. This does, though, roughly represent a common picture of the virtue that relates to anger: it is the ability to control oneself, so that ones anger does not flow over into violence.

Self-control seems a precarious basis for the avoidance of violence. Self-control sometimes may slip. Would it not be better if a person were not inclined to get angry in the first place, so that the ability to control one's anger was not necessary? This suggests that rather than the important virtue here being the ability to control the expression of one's anger, it would be the tendency not to get angry at all. Is this what education should be trying to cultivate?

Consider the following scene, in which a small boy is observed wandering in the grounds of a sanatorium or clinic in which a number of elderly people are sitting. His elders 'did not appear to take much interest in him, but what interest they took was wholly benevolent' (so they possessed that virtue, apparently). To the boy, this abstracted benevolence appeared as indifference; he was clearly trying to get some reaction out of them.

'He had gone up to an elderly lady apparently engaged upon a cross-word puzzle and insufferably snatched her paper from her. The lady had merely smiled and made a small, resigned gesture. And at this the boy had lost control of himself. Darting forward

again, he had dealt her a stinging blow across the face. And - once more - the lady simply smiled.
..... The boy had drawn back. He was very frightened. He looked from face to face of the people scattered around him. Some of them had seen his act; others were preoccupied. But nobody made any move. He gave a choking cry and rushed at a tall man with a pipe in his mouth who was sitting in idle contemplation of the garden. The boy knocked the pipe to the ground and clawed, battered at the tall man's face. The man smiled, slightly shook his head, got up and moved to another seat. Most of the people were now watching. They watched as if nothing abnormal was occurring. But this was itself the only abnormal thing about them.' (Innes 1964 p. 221)

These adults showed no anger at the boy's behaviour. This was not because they felt it but controlled themselves; they did not *feel* any anger (I shall come to the explanation of this in a moment). Does this lack of anger constitute a virtue on their part? It does not. This answer is not unconnected with the fact that their lack of reaction is indeed thoroughly abnormal. In Aristotle's understanding of a virtue, even though the possession of a virtue might be statistically abnormal, it would not be abnormal in the sense of running counter to human nature. The abnormal reaction observed here is a deficiency in the usual human tendency to respond with anger, or at least with something milder like annoyance or irritation, to injuries and insults. In failing to respond at all in any such way, these people are not only showing indifference, they are showing a lack of self-respect.

A virtue, on the Aristotelian model, is a quality which contributes to, or is partly constitutive of, human flourishing. Does this lack of reaction to injury or irritation contribute to human flourishing? It does not, because it renders the people concerned far too passive; we could even say that in a sense they are being less than human. Does this deficiency count as a vice? In this particular case it does not, because it is in no way the fault of the people concerned; in fact it is drug-induced.[7] But if the people had knowingly allowed

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[7] The scene is from a novel by Michael Innes concerning a highly improbable plot to take over the world by rendering people incapable of active resistance - making them, in fact, peaceable, or peaceful in at least one sense of the term.

their normal human responses to become atrophied, through habitually failing to stand up for themselves when they could have done so, then they would, on the Aristotelian model, be manifesting a vice, a culpable deficiency in an important human capacity.

To the sort of provocation experienced here there can be, then, under-reaction as well as over-reaction. (It would be over-reaction, for instance, if the tall man, roused to fury, had viciously attacked and injured the boy.) Somewhere between the extremes is the reaction of the person who has the relevant virtue in an Aristotelian scheme. On Aristotle's own account this virtue did not have a settled name in Greek (NE 1108a4), and it does not in modern English either, though translators sometimes use 'good temper'. Annette Baier (1985 p. 219) speaks of a virtue she names 'gentleness' which is similar, though probably not identical, to Aristotle's.

It is important that there can be a deficiency in anger as well as an excess. While it is clearly possible to be too angry, and hence too violent, it is also possible to be too little angry, and hence, *in a sense*, too peaceable. (Deliberate policies of non-violence, as in Gandhi's case, are quite different from passivity; they are policies actively engaged in.) As Aristotle is careful to point out, this does not mean that we can mathematically calculate where the mean will be; and we can now see, as perhaps Aristotle could not, that there is scope for cultural and even subcultural differences as to where the mean should be. As a matter of public discourse in modern plural societies we face the challenge of seeing how far we can agree on an understanding of this mean.

Anger and judgement

For Aristotle, the good-tempered person 'tends to be unperturbed and not to be led by passion, but to be angry in the manner, at the thing, and for the length of time, that the rule dictates' (*Nicomachean Ethics* IV. 5, Ross (1954) translation, pp. 96-7; 1125b). This phrase 'the rule dictates' (where 'rule' translates *logos*) can be puzzling, but is typical of Aristotle's treatment of the

virtues generally. There are right and wrong ways of responding to situations and other people, hence there are judgements to be made. The judgements cannot be made just by following a rule which could be set out in advance; that is why for Aristotle ethics could not be just a matter of rule-following, and why the notion of the person of practical wisdom (the *phronimos*, the person who has *phronesis*) is central to his ethics. The person who has practical wisdom will, from situation to situation, in effect be following a rule or principle (both of which terms are sometimes used to translate *logos*) but not one that could be set out by others, or perhaps that this person himself could articulate in words. The mean between excess and deficiency will be determined by the principle by which the *phronimos* would determine it; and that may be as much as can be said, *in completely general terms.*

There is, however, more that can be said about the nature of the judgements involved in particular virtues. Anger is a response to a perceived injury or offence of some kind. (Some writers treat anger as always a response to some perceived injury *to oneself*, but that is too narrow; one can be angry at the way one person is treating another, or angry about injustice, even where one is only an observer.) Part of the judgement to be made is about what sort and degree of active response is appropriate (e.g. in the example of the small boy the good-tempered person would perhaps have judged some verbal rebuke, but not physical violence, appropriate). But prior to that there is a judgement or perception that an offence has indeed been committed. This judgement is in a certain way internal to the emotion of anger itself.

It is a familiar philosophical thesis that any emotion involves a cognitive element which is a judgement or perception. Thus fear is in part constituted by the sense that something in the environment is dangerous, and so on. Anger is in part constituted by the judgement or perception that the person one is angry with has offended in some way; without this perception it would not be anger that one feels (whatever the physiological concomitants may be).

Since a judgement that some sort of offence has been committed is inherent in anger, anger carries with it the sense that it is justified. While we are actually angry with someone we think that they deserve our anger. (This seems to be true of anger against persons, which we should treat as the standard case. It does seem to be possible to be angry with things - like the computer printer when you can't get it to work - but when this happens it seems as if we are to some degree personifying the object, treating it *as if* it were a person and hence a deserving object of our anger - cf. Sabini & Silver 1982 Ch. 9).

There is certainly such a thing as unjustified anger, but there is hardly such a thing as anger which the angry person, with a clear head, considers to be unjustified at the very same time as feeling it. This is not quite true, because feelings, once aroused, do tend to last for a while - probably because their physiological concomitants of increased heart rate, flushed skin, or whatever, cannot instantly subside. So it is possible to continue to feel angry with someone - for a while - even after one has consciously realised that there is no good reason for one's anger (perhaps one only imagined the slight; perhaps one had been misinformed, or misunderstood, or whatever). But once one consciously judges that one's sense of an insult or injury is misplaced, hence that one's anger is unjustified, the anger is on the way to evaporating.

But while the anger lasts, and whatever may have occasioned it, we typically feel - the word 'think' may suggest something too rational for such occasions - that the person we are angry with deserves our anger. Indeed our anger inclines us to interpret whatever the other is doing in a negative light. Harré (1986 p.7) has a good description of this:

'... the anger 'felt' by the apparently injured party (A) is the (almost) exclusive basis for A's interpretation of the actions of B as transgressions against A's rights, dignity or the like. If A feels annoyed, then this is the best ground for holding that B's actions must have been offensive. Furthermore, if B tries to escape from the 'no win' situation by denying an intention to offend, then A has further cause for complaint and ground for indignation. B's

defence implies that B (offensively) believes that A is the kind of person who would impose unjust interpretations on B's actions or facial expressions, just to nourish his or her anger.'

Indeed it is not just B's anger that A thinks B deserves - typically A wants to hurt or punish or humiliate B in some way, and this too A thinks B deserves. It is, then, all too easy for anger to slip into violence, accompanied by the sense that the violence is just what the person had coming to them.

This kind of analysis gives us a way of unpacking what is involved in the differential tendencies, in line with Aristotle's account, to feel anger too little, or appropriately, or too much. The person who is too little inclined to anger is likely to be someone who has no self-respect or who does not think anything is worth feeling strongly about. The person who is too much inclined to anger is likely to be someone who is in a certain way over-sensitive, perceiving slights or offences where there are none, or reacting disproportionately to those which are there - even at times to the point of violence. The person whose tendency to anger is neither defective or excessive gets his or her judgements right.

The person who has the genuinely Aristotelian virtue - who will also be a person of practical wisdom, since for Aristotle this is essential to any genuine virtue - will get these judgements right without particularly having to think about it. Having consciously to review one's judgement and perception is in that way a second best; nevertheless, it may be very desirable. Suppose a person is in the habit of asking herself 'am I right to take this as an insult, or an I overreacting?' This person will be slower to anger than one who does not reflect on her own reactions in this way; and even where her anger survives her self-reflection, she will be less likely to feel that violence is a deserved expression of her anger.

This shows a way in which education should be able to get a grip even on something often as apparently non-rational as anger (cf. Dent 1984; anger is one of his main examples). There is a sort of reasoning inherent in anger, and it is an educational task to try to see that people are aware of the reasoning which they would

otherwise not articulate to themselves, and that they are concerned about the validity of their own reasoning. This also shows that the language of virtues can lead us back to the language of norms, in which we ask ourselves whether our responses and our feelings are justified. 'Has this person actually offended against some moral norm? (Maybe he has upset me, but that's not the same thing). Should I blame him? Or was he only doing what one would expect of anyone in that situation?' And so on.

None of this is saying that we should belittle our own feelings or ignore those of others. There is point in the idea, often found in suggestions for conflict resolution, and in the book about *Anger in the Classroom* (Leseho & Howard-Rose, 1994) from which I quoted above, that acknowledging our feelings, to ourselves and to others, can be a step in preventing negative feelings from escalating into anger and beyond that into violence. But part of the point of this is that acknowledging our feelings brings them into the open and hence up against public norms. Our feelings are not self-validating; the fact that I feel angry cannot by itself show my anger to be justified. Yet that *is* just the way it feels at the time; so I need the reference to something external to my feelings - which can include public norms - to bring me to question my own feelings. Recognition of a clear prohibition on violence, for instance, could be the factor which makes the difference between anger turning and not turning to violence.

This discussion of anger has reinforced the conclusion of the earlier discussion, that while a language of norms by itself will not enable us to say all we want or need to say about violence, the public concern about violence also cannot without remainder be unpacked into talk about the virtues that are to be developed or the vices to be avoided. (In particular, 'non-violence' is not itself the name of a virtue.)

We need to recognise, with MacIntyre (1981 p. 141), that a community needs a table of offences - of kinds of act which are intolerable - as well as a table of virtues. In other words, we

cannot avoid thinking in terms of norms which prohibit certain types of action.[8] At the same time we can recognise that the two ways of talking need not be opposed to each other. As we shall see again below, the contrast can easily be overdrawn.

8 I say more in Appendix 5 about the form such norms might take in relation to violence; this also involves some discussion of what is to count as violence, which is by no means as unproblematic as I have assumed in this chapter.

Part III

A morality of norms

At this stage it still seems to me that a language of norms has a certain priority in the articulation of morality(n). But since norms - or rules and principles - have come in for heavy criticism in the recent pro-virtue literature, a positive defence of their role is needed. This is the task of Part III. I reply to a number of objections to rules, consider the role that rules and principles can play in moral thought and discourse, and attempt an overview of the public functions of moral norms.

Chapter Seven
What's wrong with rules?

Rules in recent philosophy of moral education

The salience of rules has often been downplayed in recent academic thinking about morality and moral education, including philosophical writing on the latter.[1] I shall give here some examples from *TRAW*. The first is from Michael Rustin, not himself a philosopher, but a sociologist also well versed in psychoanalysis:

'In the sphere of education, there is the demand that moral standards should be taught in schools..... The implicit idea seems to be that morality consists of a self-evident set of rules and precepts'. (p. 76)

Rustin himself takes a negative view of this demand:

'The demand for prescriptive teaching of moral principles has recently functioned mainly as a mechanism of denial of the damage that is being done by the weakening of many social institutions, including the family.... . Whilst there have been many demands that more attention be given to moral issues, this prescriptive climate has been largely inimical to rather than supportive of moral thinking.' (p. 90)

Several things are worth noting here:

i) Rustin makes no distinction (in these passages, or as far as I can see elsewhere in his chapter) between 'rules' and 'principles' (and indeed 'precepts'). In terms of the distinction I shall make later, he is talking about rules.

ii) The idea of teaching rules or principles, and recognition of social and institutional factors, are treated as mutually opposed. Rustin may well be right that one can function as a distraction from the other. But there is no necessary inconsistency between the two lines of thought. There is a possibililty to be considered

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[1] Richard Peters, as recognised by White (1990, p. 41), did give an important role to rules and a good deal of space to them; there has been much less in most writers about moral education within philosophy of education since then.

that the teaching of rules or principles could actually strengthen social institutions, including the family.

iii) The teaching of rules or principles is seen as inimical to moral thinking. The possibility that the two could be mutually supportive needs more attention.

Carole Cox in the same volume writes in similar vein, but going further, apparently rejecting the idea of moral rules altogether:

'.... when we express our concerns about the moral education of the young, we can find ourselves wanting children to know what the rules are and how to apply those rules. Unfortunately, there is no set of tablets of stone on which these rules are inscribed. Instead, moral situations are specific and particular, concrete and local. They require us to respond to these particulars, rather than obey a rule or maxim.' (p. 68)

Cox does not expand on the philosophy underlying her rejection of rules. She appears in this passage to be adopting the position which Dancy has labelled particularism, though Cox herself is perhaps more likely to be following feminist arguments than those of Dancy.[2] What Cox turns to straight after this passage is a virtue ethic (thereby exemplifying how it is possible in current writing about moral education within philosophy of education almost to take for granted a rejection of anything that smacks of Kantianism or universalism, without even running through the arguments).

In the same volume, Richard Smith takes a view that is in several ways similar to Cox's, emphasising the inescapable role of judgement and the value of literature in developing judgement; but whereas Cox's first mention of rules is apparently to deny that there are any, Smith's first mention of them, after his opening example from *Huckleberry Finn*, is to say that this example reminds us that '*as well as moral principles or rules* ' [my italics] there are many other elements of the moral life (p. 106).

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[2]Dancy defends particularism in Dancy (1993). In Dancy (1992) he explicitly aligns particularism with feminist arguments for an ethic of care. Particularism will come up again below.

One might think that the difference between Cox and Smith is only that Smith's language is more circumspect. But the differences between contributors to *TRAW* go a little deeper than this, even though one might get an overall impression that they share a common point of view (an impression reinforced by the editors, p. x).[3]

As in moral philosophy generally, so in philosophy of education, we can distinguish in principle two quite different critical positions regarding rules, which in pure forms would be incompatible with each other, though both mean that little space is given to rules.

One position is essentially negative about the role of rules. It may actually give some space to discussing them, but only in order to reject or minimize their role. Some writing on an ethic of care is like this, as is some virtue ethics, and as is much of the writing critical of morality(n) (these categories overlap, of course). A good deal of recent philosophical writing about moral education adopts this kind of position, while sometimes, as in Cox's case, assuming rather than explicitly using the arguments that have been made elsewhere in philosophy (something which philosophy of education will surely sometimes have to do if it is to say anything substantial about education).

A second position is much more positive about rules; it allows that there is a significant, perhaps important, even perhaps a basic role

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[3] John White, for instance, explicitly asserts the importance of certain rules. In this respect White seems to have been consistent throughout his writings on moral education. In White (1982) - written before *After Virtue* initiated widespread attention to virtues - he treats moral minimalism as a matter of following basic moral rules, and while he considers various possibilities for moving beyond minimalism, he does not suggest that such rules ever cease to have a role. In *Education and the Good Life* the idea of a basic moral framework is still there, and in his chapter in *TRAW* he recognises both certain 'framework prohibitions' and rules which require some habituation - and thus are part-way towards being virtues - such as 'rules against lying, promise-breaking, not helping people in distress, being unfair'. Thus, while White wants to go well beyond a morality of rules, and also considers that 'where possible, the distinction between virtues and rules could well be eroded' (*TRAW* p.23), he never suggests, as does Cox, that there are no rules to be taught and to be followed.

for rules in morality; but it holds (sometimes only implicitly) that because this is fairly obvious and a well-worn point, we don't actually need to say much about it.[4]

In response to this I think that philosophy, and philosophy of education in particular, does need to say rather more about moral rules, for at least three reasons.

1) A lot of popular thinking about morality does see it as something like a set of rules; media reaction to events like the death of Philip Lawrence seems often to have taken the form that parents or teachers have failed to inculcate into children adherence to certain basic norms or standards. The talk of absolutes on such occasions fits with a law- or rule-model of morality.

If popular conceptions of morality often do fit this pattern, philosophers should not ignore the matter. If philosophy of education is to be a species of applied philosophy - and if that is to mean, not just that it says things which could be applied, but that

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[4] A particularly explicit example of this position occurs in a writer who has been heavily influenced by postmodernist thought but who has retained the analytical penchant for clear distinctions: the philosopher of religion Don Cupitt. In a work on ethics, in which he uses the terms 'morality' and 'ethics' in much the way that Bernard Williams does, Cupitt writes:

'Morality, for the most part, can be left to look after itself. Where in any particular sphere of life rules of practice are needed, people can be relied upon to evolve them. So long as the rules are working well people can be relied upon to maintain them, and when they have become redundant or archaic, nothing can revive them and people will let them drop.'

'.....the renegotiation of the rules of morality looks like a straightforwardly political task. Through public debate one tries to obtain and establish an agreed code of practice, backed where necessary by sanctions. And philosophy nowadays does not need to say very much more about moral codes than that.' (Cupitt 1995, pp.11-12, paragraphs transposed.)

What Cupitt has in mind here does seem to be morality(n): a code of rules serving a social function and liable to be changed as necessary in order to continue to serve that function in changing circumstances. But it is surprising that a writer like Cupitt who must be well aware of critiques of morality as ideology, and of the possibilities of distortion and bias in public communication, can be so sanguine about the processes of maintenance and change.

it actually gets some application - then it cannot afford to ignore or be high-handed towards popular conceptions. Philosophy of education surely should be able to offer some guidance to teachers who are faced with popular demands for their engagement in moral education, even if those demands are based on misconceptions. In doing this it needs to recognise that if there are differences between popular understandings and philosophers' understandings, the untutored understandings of teachers for the most part (especially if there is no philosophical content in teacher education) are going to be closer to the popular ones than to the philosophers' ones. So philosophy of education needs to engage with the popular conceptions - to understand their motivation, and to see whether, perhaps in some aspects if not in all, there is point in retaining those conceptions.

2) In engaging with popular conceptions, philosophy of education has to take seriously the critiques of the role of rules in morality which have been coming out of moral philosophy in recent years. In doing this philosophy of education has, of course, to remember that it is concerned with *education*, not only with the moral thought of mature moral agents.

3) Philosophy - educational, moral and political - has to consider whether the role of rules in morality is so straightforward and self-sustaining that it can be left to look after itself. If rules were unproblematically transmitted from one generation to the next there might indeed be little for philosophers of education to say. But rules have to be interpreted, perhaps reinterpreted, and sometimes renegotiated (there will be more in later chapters on what these processes can amount to). There are surely educational issues arising here.

In what follows, then, I shall make a contribution towards redressing the current balance in the literature by looking more closely at the moral role of rules in moral contexts, beginning with objections which have been made to this role.

Objections to rules

Criticisms in the literature of the role of rules do not necessarily take account of the distinction between morality(n) and the broader field. An argument, then, which says in general terms 'there is more to morality than rules' may turn out in effect to be an argument that there is more to ethics than morality(n); and this, of course, is something that the case for morality(n) is already committed to. Nevertheless, objections to the role of rules in morality may turn out to have a bearing on how we interpret morality(n). Here, then, I shall not try to select out in advance points which bear only on morality(n), but will consider what seem to me to be the main lines of attack in the literature on the role of rules in morality (there may, of course, be some that I have missed). These attacks are not necessarily all found in the same writers and they do not necessarily form a consistent set.

a) Some objections to a morality of rules are objections to the idea of *absolute* rules.

b) Some are objections to the idea of *unchanging* rules (cf. the passage from Cox above denying that there are tablets of stone on which the rules are written).

c) Some are objections to the idea of *universal* rules.

d) Some objections turn on the fundamental matter of what it is that makes something right or wrong: the objection is to the idea that something is right or wrong *because it is against the rules.*

e) Some objections turn on the role that rules have - or may be thought to have - in moral reasoning, judgement and perception. In particular, such objections often involve the rejection of a model by which moral reasoning consists in seeing that a particular instance falls under a general rule.

f) Some objections turn on the question of motivation; it is argued that doing something *because the rule demands it* is not an appropriate or desirable form of motivation.

g) Some objections concern the kind of *authority* that rules can have: why should moral rules be taken to be in any way authoritative? (Cf. Anscombe's argument against the idea of moral law, mentioned in Chapter 4).

Of these types of objection, the last two seem quite closely interrelated; if someone does something because a rule demands it, then what moves them to obey the rule may be that they recognise the rule as having authority. At the same time, the questions about motivation and authority are not ones that arise only about morality construed as a set of rules; they arise more generally about morality(n), so that even if we were persuaded that we should think of morality(n) in some way other than as a set of rules, we would still have the questions 'Is it a desirable form of motivation that a person does something because it is what morality(n) requires?' and 'What kind of authority does morality(n) have?'. These are questions I shall take up in Chapters 10 and 11.

In the remainder of this chapter I shall treat objections (a) to (c) as matters of clarification to be cleared out of the way fairly briskly. Objection (d) will turn out to raise more fundamental issues, and will lead into consideration of (e), which will be the topic of the next chapter.

Absolute, unchanging and universal?

a) A full response to this objection would require consideration of whether there can be absolute moral rules; and this in turn would require a distinction between two rather different (though not unrelated) construals of 'absolute'.[5] 'Absolute' can mean 'not relative to anything': this is, I think, the sense in which Kant conceives the categorical imperative as absolute (though the term, so far as I am aware, is not his). The categorical imperative is not even relative to human nature, since it would apply to any rational beings. More often perhaps, in ordinary speech, 'absolute'

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5 Cf. *TAV* pp. 38-9.

is used to mean 'allowing no exceptions'.[6] Some people who want to defend a morality of rules may want to defend exceptionless rules along with this; but I see no need to. Our ordinary concept of rules does not imply that they are absolute; this is shown by the fact that we have in common usage the idea of an exception to a rule (as opposed to a violation). Without further argument as to why morality must be special in this respect, it is possible that morality(n) is a set of rules to which there can in special circumstances be exceptions. And this too is an idea that is common in ordinary conceptions of morality (one of the commonest reactions of students to a presentation of Kantian ethics is to point out circumstances in which it seems that there might be a justified exception to, for instance, the rule that one must not tell a lie.)

b) That rules can change is a familiar fact in many contexts. So the idea of morality(n) as a set of rules is not (without further argument) committed to these rules being unchanging. Indeed *prima facie* there is reason to think (with Cupitt in footnote 4) that they are likely to change. The root idea of morality(n) was of checks on tendencies which in some sense 'come naturally' (the scare quotes are essential). But human beings, as part of nature, live in an environment, both natural and humanly manipulated, which is changing. If the environment changes so much that 'natural' tendencies which once would have been dangerous are no longer dangerous then (I am tempted to say 'naturally') one would expect the elements of morality(n) to change. (This is roughly the kind of account which many people would give of the way in which contraception has changed the rules of 'sexual morality'.[7]) The possibility of norms changing in response to changing circumstances and to criticism will be important in Chapters 11 and 12.

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6 On the matter of absolutes in this sense, it is interesting that Anscombe (who is no Kantian) in her critique of law-like conceptions of ethics and defence of attention to virtues, also criticises consequentialist thinking precisely because it does not recognise absolutes.

7 I put this in scare quotes because I think that in a sense there is no such thing as (specifically) sexual morality - cf. *TAV* pp. 64-5.

c) The idea that moral rules are universal often comes in the same package (labelled 'Kantian') with the ideas 'absolute' and 'unchanging'.[8] To return to a distinction made in Chapter 4, the Kantian (and in many respects the Christian) conception is indeed that the moral law is universal. But this is not a necessary part of the notion of morality as a set of rules. We have taken morality(n) to have a similar function to that of law. The idea of law (the positive law of states) is clearly not undermined by the fact that it is not universal.

Interestingly, it is also possible to see morality, on the dimension of local to universal, as closer to the *local* than positive law is. This is because in a modern plural state, the law at least applies to everyone under the jurisdiction of that state,[9] whereas (on certain relativist views) morality may vary from culture to culture within one state, or (on certain sorts of subjectivist view) it may even vary from one individual to another.

The most viable conception of moral norms in the foreseeable future may well see them as not very different in scope from actual law. That is, any set of moral norms will be the norms of a society, though its elements will often in fact, but not necessarily, be universally held. (See also Chapter 12.) It is a communitarian truism, now increasingly recognised by liberals, that human beings are not brought up (merely) as members of the human race, but as members of a particular society. It is the norms of a society, whether moral or legal, which they are, first and foremost, initiated into. Some moral norms may indeed be widely, and progressively more widely, shared across many societies, for intelligible reasons (just as legal systems also, with increasing globalization, may tend towards increasing similarities); but it will still be true that what the child first learns is 'this is what we do

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8 Cf. A. Baier (1985, p. 235), for whom universality is a 'mere Kantian prejudice'.

9 There is, however, beginning to be increased consideration, both in political practice and political philosophy, of the possibility of culturally differentiated legal systems: cf. Kymlicka (1995) and Young (1990). In an unpublished paper on children's rights I have considered whether plural societies might have to accept cultural differentiation in this respect.

(here)' or 'this is not done (here)' rather than 'this is how anybody, anywhere should behave towards anybody, anywhere'.[10]

Rules and reasons

From the point of view of recent mainstream moral philosophy (at least in the Anglo-American tradition), objection (d) probably raises the most fundamental issues. Does reference to a rule tell us *why* something is wrong (or right)? If not, what are the rules for?

The basic point behind the objection can be put like this. If something is wrong, there are reasons why it is wrong. These reasons may or may not apply also to any other instances which are similar in certain ways (many philosophers, including myself, think that reasons have an inherent generality; but Dancy argues against this, and some feminist positions perhaps reject it without a great deal of argument). If there is a rule against something then (if the rule is not simply ungrounded, like the taboos to which MacIntyre (1981 pp. 105-6) refers) there will be this rule *because* the kind of conduct to which it refers is wrong; the conduct will not be wrong *because* of the rule. Any reasons we can give for the wrongness of killing will be reasons against killing in any individual case, and will also be reasons for a rule against killing; but 'because there is a rule against it' will not itself be a reason why killing is wrong.

Mary Warnock (1977, p. 138) goes so far as to say 'a rule against bullying or theft would be an absurdity'. In the context, she means that it would be absurd for a school to put in its list of rules 'There is to be no bullying' or 'There is to be no theft'. To me, this is not obviously absurd, but that is a point I shall eventually return to in Chapter 12. Warnock's underlying point is the one we

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10 Griffin(1996) also argues that morality is rather like law - meaning positive law - instancing the norms relating to matters such as euthanasia. Though he does not explicitly address the point about scope (using in this context, as is so often done in philosophy, the philosopher's rather unspecified 'we') it is a plausible concomitant of his view that there would be a certain culture-relativity about norms on life and death.

are concerned with now, and this relates to morality(n), whether or not it applies to school rules: 'A rule against bullying or theft ..... would suggest that ..... apart from the existence of the rule, there might be nothing against bullying or theft...' (*ibid*).

Geoffrey Warnock makes much the same point, explicitly referring to a putative analogy between morality and law. On a certain interpretation of this analogy 'just as something illegal would not *be* illegal if the legal rule in question did not exist, so something morally wrong would not *be* morally wrong if the moral rule in question did not exist' (1971, p. 57).[11] This, as he says, does not seem right; but while Warnock has shown here a point at which the analogy between law and morality breaks down, this seems to me not to undermine a possible deeper analogy: that both morality and law might involve rules *which can be seen to have a certain kind of underlying rationale.*

The disanalogy perhaps occurs because there is a distinct process by which laws are made but no such process by which moral rules can be made (this point will be relevant again when I discuss the kind of authority that rules can have, and how they can change). So although the same reasons which could underpin a moral rule might also in many cases be able to underpin a law, it is not possible to say that the law exists until it has been made, and if a law has been made for quite other reasons, it still equally exists. In the case of morality, if we are to speak of moral rules at all, we will want both to look at actual practice - what is recognised, taught and so on within a given society - to establish whether certain rules exist, and also to look at the reasons behind the rules, to know whether they are to be counted as *moral* rules.[12]

If the analogy between law and morality(n) still holds in terms

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11 Warnock does acknowledge the existence of moral rules in a certain sense, but thinks their existence is of no fundamental status. We shall see this in Chapter 9. On the issues in the present section Straughan(1989) Chapter 1 is also useful.

12 In societies in which a firm distinction between law and morality had not emerged, this distinction could not apply; and it might indeed be more likely in such societies that there would be talk of something being unlawful even though no law against it had explicitly been made.

of the underlying functions they serve, then the essential point which I take both Warnocks to be making still holds. There will be no reason for counting certain rules as part of morality(n) if they cannot be seen as serving the underlying values and interests which morality(n) protects and promotes; when something is wrong, in the context of morality(n), it will not be wrong *because it breaks a rule* but because of its relation to the values and interests which underlie morality(n).

There are complications to be considered. One concerns the difference between regulative and constitutive rules; another concerns the extent to which the reason for a rule has to be understood.

Regulative and constitutive

Discussions of morality(n) commonly treat moral rules as regulative, that is, as regulating, directing and putting constraints on conduct which could go on independently of the rules. To put it crudely, it is possible, prior to or independently of the existence of the moral rules, for people to ignore others, aid others, injure others, and so on. The rules come in to tell people whether or not they should do these things.

Standish in *TRAW* (p. 52), referring to the distinction between regulative and constitutive rules,[13] says 'to imagine that morality is centrally a matter of regulative rules gets the whole landscape wrong. The regulative comes to usurp the place of meaning in our moral geography, covering it over with abstract grid lines of control'.

The point that Standish expresses in terms of 'meaning in our moral geography' is an important one. A lot of morality, or ethics, is a matter of giving shape to lives. The biological make-up of human beings by itself leaves open a vast range of ways of behaviour. Even if evolutionary psychology succeeds in explaining some of the ways in which patterns of behaviour emerge, it cannot

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13 The distinction itself is by now a commonplace of philosophical terminology. It was possibly first used by Searle (1967), while a related distinction was used by Rawls (1967).

by itself explain just which particular forms of life will emerge within the range of possibilities. And we know that the range of possibilities is considerable, because all the human forms of life which ever have existed must be compatible with human biological make-up, and it would be implausible to suppose that what has existed so far has already exhausted the possibilities.

Within this vast range, then, what would otherwise be an almost formless landscape is shaped into meaningful contours by the moral geography of particular ways of doing things and particular norms on what is to be avoided.[14] (A similar point was made in the discussion of diversity in Chapter 1.) Standish, then, wants to treat morality essentially as constitutive of forms of life rather than as regulative of basic human behaviour.

It is tempting to think that the distinction between regulative and constitutive rules lines up with the distinction between morality(n) and other areas of morality or ethics. Regulative rules for human conduct would constitute morality(n); many constitutive rules, giving particular shapes to human activities, would exist in the wider ethical space. It is not, however, possible to collapse the two distinctions into one; nor does there seem any particular reason, other than a desire for neatness, for trying to do so.

There may be some clear cases of constitutive rules (though the obvious ones, like the rules constituting the games of chess or football, seem to fall outside morality even in the broadest sense); and there may be some clear cases of regulative rules ('do not let your weapon get blunt' in the case of the hunter-gatherer band?) But in many cases between the clear ones it appears that norms regulate human behaviour precisely by constituting one practice rather than another possible practice. Thus (as Hampshire 1983 and Nussbaum 1993, for instance, have argued) there will always be some norms regulating sexual relationships. In many societies there have been norms constituting the relationship, and institution, of marriage. It is plausible to see the rule against

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14 Cf. *TAV* p.45 and Hampshire (1983) Ch. 6

adultery, for instance, as constitutive of the institution; but the whole institution has itself performed a regulative function.

Similarly, the rule 'don't break promises' is not plausibly seen as a rule regulating the activities of people who happen to have made promises; it is rather a constitutive element of the practice of promising. At the same time, the whole practice of promising serves a regulative function in human affairs, bringing a degree of structure and predictability where these would otherwise be lacking. Thus it can be seen as contributing to the function of morality(n) just as surely as a norm against killing.[15]

A significant difference between the two cases just considered seems to be, not the distinction between the regulative and the constitutive, but the difference of degree in how much scope for variation there is, compatibly with the function of morality(n). It seems unlikely that any set of norms which had developed to serve the functions of morality(n) would not incorporate in some form the practice of promising. There seems, in contrast, scope for considerable variation in what sort of practices relating to sexual relations might be incorporated into a set of norms.

To be more systematic, I would suggest that among the prevailing norms of a given society we might find at least the following four kinds of relationship which a norm might hold to underlying reasons for the norm:

(1) There are cases like the norms against killing and assault, where there are generally clear enough considerations against the action itself which would hold even if no general rule had been formulated.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, hence numbered (4), there are norms which, viewed in relation to the underlying point of morality(n), will seem no more than taboos. (I am old enough to

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15 Cf. my comment in Chapter 5 on Warnock's attempt to construe the practice of promising in terms of the virtue of non-deception.

remember a time when many people viewed the length of a man's hair with something tantamount to moral fervour.)

The awkward cases are between the ends of the spectrum. Closer to (4) are cases where wide variation in the norms between one culture and another seems possible, since morality(n) does not dictate any particular set, but some set of norms rather than none at all may be necessary. Many people have viewed norms about sexual relationships in this way (whereas on hair length there probably doesn't have to be any norm at all). This will be category (3).

Similar in some ways to category (3) will be cases in category (2) where there actually seem to be good reasons, of a consequentialist kind, for one particular set of norms (or some set within a narrow range); but where the connection between individual acts and the underlying purposes of morality(n) is looser than in (1). Some people (including Hare 1992) have argued that, rather than monogamous marriage being just one among many possible sets of norms for sexual relationships, it is the best available on consequentialist grounds, because of the effects regarding stability in the upbringing of children and so on. My own argument does not require me to take a view on this, but suppose for the moment that it is right. Then a society has reason to try to uphold norms of monogamy. But that fact itself seems to give only a weak reason to any individual for going along with the norms. I shall come back to this point in Chapter 12 when considering what sort of authority norms can have.

Rules and understanding

That a rule serves the general function of morality(n) does not by itself imply that the rule must be understood *as serving that function* by all those (or even any of those) who follow it. Rather in the way that religious rules prohibiting certain dietary practices might in fact serve functions of nutrition or hygiene, rules which are understood as commands of God or even rules which are simply seen as taboos (cf. MacIntyre 1981, pp. 105-6) could be part of morality(n) if they in fact serve its functions. In that case,

the fact that an act is against the rule (or is *taboo)* might be all the reason against the act which those following the rule could actually offer.

In such a case, though the existence of the rule, and the fact that the rule is followed (whatever the reasons for people's following it) may together serve a social function, the extent of understanding of the rule (within the community concerned) is clearly limited. Since here we are talking about the public understanding of morality, we can hardly include *rules whose rationale is not understood* among the contents of that understanding. (If we did, we would be going for something like Plato's noble lie; I shall in effect argue later that in such a case the rule could not be granted the kind of authority that a moral rule needs.) We are talking too about education. Rules whose rationale is not understood may be inculcated but can hardly be part of the content of education - at least, though they may be laid down early on, an education which in general encourages critical reflection cannot insulate particular rules from reflection. Arguably, it is not just education, but the whole cultural climate of late modernity which encourages critical reflection; in that case, Williams' (1985, Ch. 9) point about there being no route back from reflection applies: we cannot go back to rules unquestioningly accepted, even if we did (on reflection) consider that the purposes of morality(n) would be better served by rules unquestioningly accepted.

So far, I have argued that none of the objections from (a) to (d) gives us much reason for rejecting the role of rules in morality. I shall turn in the next chapter to a consideration of moral reasoning. It is worth remarking here that in recent philosophical thinking about moral education there is an unstable relationship between the idea of rules and the idea of reasoning. Sometimes, both reference to rules and the idea of moral reasoning are lumped together in one package (which might be labelled 'rationalistic' or 'cognitive') which is opposed to the package labelled 'ethics of care' or 'virtue ethics' - where the latter package both puts more emphasis on the affective as against the cognitive

or rational, and more emphasis on the particular as against the general. In other contexts, reasoning and rules may be seen as opposed to each other; here rules are linked to the general and reasoning is linked to the particular, the idea being that general rules will not by themselves give answers (or will not give appropriate answers) in all particular cases, so that reasoning about the particular has to be done.

In the next chapter, I shall agree that reasoning about particulars does not have to refer to general rules; having at that point apparently suggested that rules are not needed at all, I shall still have to show reason why, nevertheless, there is a lot to be said for rules.

Chapter Eight
Rules and moral reasoning

More objections to rules

Of all the objections to construing morality(n) in terms of rules, those which turn on the nature of moral reasoning, judgement and perception are perhaps the most directly pertinent to education, since they raise the question of whether people can be taught rules for thinking morally. The terms 'reasoning, judgement and perception' cover a wide field (deliberately); below I shall sometimes use the term 'moral thought' as a general term which does not prejudge questions such as how explicit the thinking has to be, or whether there has to be some thinking which *precedes* action.

One quite common objection in recent moral philosophy to the model of morality as a set of rules is an objection to a certain model of moral thought.[1] This model is one of deduction of a conclusion about a particular instance from a general rule. Thus:

Breaking promises is wrong (a universal premise which is known in advance)
To do this would be to break a promise (a particular premise, arrived at by seeing that this particular act can be subsumed within the general category of promise-breaking)
Therefore I should not do this.

Such a form of argument can be expressed formally as a syllogism; indeed it can fit the pattern of practical reasoning used by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.7. I shall call this the deductive model of moral reasoning. That some moral philosophy and philosophical writing on moral education has used such a model is certainly true; see for instance, K. Baier (1973). Explicitly using an analogy with legal reasoning, which he construes on the deductive model, Baier argues that legal reasoning should be taught as an element of moral education.

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1 For this objection cf., for example, Pincoffs (1983); Schneewind (1983).

There are several possible objections to the idea that moral thought works on the deductive model. One would be that it is in all circumstances false, since moral thought never works that way. But that is implausible; it is surely not unknown for someone to avoid taking an action because she realises that it would involve breaking a promise, and she believes that promises ought to be kept. Far more plausible is the objection to construing all moral thought on this model, since some moral thought does not take that form. That seems to me certainly true, as I shall illustrate below. A third objection, which I shall call here the Standish objection, holds that in so far as we do try to follow, and to teach, a deductive model we shall be going wrong by obscuring people's responsibility to exercise their own judgement in the complexities of real life:

'clear rules cover over the difficulty that *responsibility* to our circumstances must face. The regulative can seduce us with its formal appeal, seeming to dissolve the messy complexities of our ordinary experience.' (Standish in *TRAW,* p. 52)[2]

A fourth objection, the Smith objection, is that overemphasis on rules and principles

'acts as a standing invitation not only to conceive of moral thinking as a search for the rigid and unvarying guidance of rules, *but to see that search, and the use of rules, as something for special occasions only* [my italics]: for when we are confronted with a dilemma, or when we are discussing euthanasia or genetic

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2 By 'responsibility to our circumstances' Standish presumably means something like 'responsiveness to circumstances'. It is a point worth making (in line with Sartre) that no one has responsibility *to* (as opposed to 'for') the rules as such; but to speak of responsibility *to* the circumstances is no better. One has a responsibility *to* other persons, and that responsibility includes both responding to circumstances and also not neglecting to consider, though not slavishly obeying, the rules that the other persons recognise and therefore expect one to follow. Within a religious framework, one might also have responsibility to God. By extension from responsibility to other persons, one may have responsibility to animals, and even conceivably to the environment. But if we speak of our responsibility *to* (as opposed to *for*) the environment, it is as if we are supposing that the environment can call us to account, because responsibility in the present sense is very close to accountability (see Haydon 1978).

engineering. It obscures the way that the moral dimension colours the whole of our lives.' (Smith in *TRAW* p. 116)

Here, fully conceding the second objection, I shall argue that while in theory moral reasoning could dispense with rules, we can recognise an important role for rules and principles in actual moral thought, while meeting the Standish and Smith objections.

Consider Blum's everyday example of the woman giving up her seat to an older woman laden with shopping:

' .... when Joan perceives the standing woman's discomfort, her offer to help need not be mediated by a rule, principle or precept; she may be acting out of direct compassion, an emotion-based sentiment in which the woman's discomfort is directly taken as a reason for helping.' Blum (1994) pp. 32-3

In such a case we do not need to say that no kind of thought whatever is involved; there is after all a perception of the woman as being in discomfort, and the woman's discomfort is taken as a reason; we are not talking about a pure stimulus-response, automatic piece of behaviour. But certainly there need be no spelt-out step-by-step reasoning procedure going on.

There are in fact two important points illustrated by Blum's example:[3] that there need be no reference to a general rule, and that there need be no conscious reasoning process going on. Sometimes it may be assumed that these two points are effectively one, on the basis that when there is a consciously articulated process of reasoning going on, it must be a matter of deducing the particular conclusion from the rule. But this is not so: *even a consciously articulated piece of reasoning need not refer to a general rule.*

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3 Later in the same chapter Blum analyses in detail the elements which make up the moral thought that may be involved even in quite simple exercises of moral appraisal and behaviour.

Guidelines for moral reasoning

Consider the following set of guidelines for moral reasoning (deliberately expressed in non-technical language, such as could plausibly be used in schools rather than academic journals).

1. *Be aware of the ways in which what you are doing is going to affect other people. Think about this if it's not obvious.*

2. *Try to think yourself into the position of other people affected by what you are doing; try to see what it is like to be in their shoes.*

3. *Think whether they would be likely to agree to what you are doing. Sometimes, the appropriate way of doing this will be to ask them. If that's not possible, you can still ask yourself 'if I were in their position, would I agree to be on the receiving end of the kind of thing which I, now, am thinking of doing?' (E.g. if you have in mind to do something which involves deceiving another person, ask yourself whether you could agree to be deceived in a situation like this.)*

4. *Having seen what it would be like to be in the position of each of the people affected - seeing it, if you can, as if it were happening to you - ask yourself whether you think it is all right for people, in the sort of situation you're in now, to do the kind of thing you are thinking of doing.*[4]

I formulated this set of guidelines on an earlier occasion to show that it could be done; that it is not difficult to construct guidelines for moral reasoning (it being a further question whether there is good reason for anyone to adopt them). This set of guidelines is not, of course, in any important sense original; indeed to anyone familiar with the literature the influence both of Kantian ethics and of utilitarianism will be clear. It is closest perhaps to the philosophy of R. M. Hare, who was himself influenced by both Kant and utilitarianism (and hence it might remind some readers of

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[4] This set of guidelines is taken without alteration (except that I have added numbers) from a conference paper, Haydon (forthcoming).

Kohlberg, who was in turn influenced by Hare in his discussion of Stage 6 reasoning). But there is also in it a reference to Habermas (in the move from the 'monologic' to the 'dialogic' in step 3), and to the strand in feminist ethics which stresses conversation as the way for moral problems to be resolved (e.g. Noddings 1984 pp. 132 ff.). Outside of academic writing there is in it something of the everyday question 'what if everyone did that?', which echoes the Golden Rule of the Bible 'do unto others what you would have them do unto you', and similar precepts in many other traditions. This is not surprising, since a form of reasoning which requires people to think about the effects of their actions on others will tend to serve the functions of morality(n).

I am not concerned here with whether this set of guidelines is in some sense 'the correct' model of moral reasoning. If moral reasoning were to be taught as such, then it might be that individual schools, on their own initiative, would develop their own model, or could follow the model above, or some other which is available.[5] Alternatively, if there were to be a national scheme, and appropriate teacher training to back it up, there would have to be convergence on a single model, whether by consensus or by imposition. But my guess is that any model which would be likely to attract sufficient agreement would have to say something about considering the effects of one's actions on others, and would have to have an affinity with the 'what if everyone did that?' question; and so it would not look totally different from the version above.

I am interested here in the fact that this model of moral reasoning makes no reference to moral rules.[6] In that way it escapes many of the objections that are likely commonly to be raised against any suggestion that moral reasoning might be taught. Moral reasoning

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5 John Wilson's work (see e.g. 1990, and references there), which has been influenced by similar sources, would be a likely resource.

6 While it does not itself refer to any first-order moral rules, these guidelines, or something like them, could themselves be seen as constituting a set of moral norms. That is, it could well be considered that thinking morally in something like this way (and taking the trouble to do so) is not optional, but is itself a moral requirement - especially in situations where no clear application of first-order rules is to be had.

in the form suggested does not, so far as I can see, dilute in any way the *concreteness* of thinking about what to do in a particular situation. Much moral reasoning *is* a matter of attending to the actual situation, seeing how people will be affected in this situation, seeing whether these people in this situation could agree to what you are proposing to do - actually asking them and talking it through when possible - and in all of this paying attention to how people will feel, whether they may be hurt, and so on. This seems to me to be just the sort of contextualised thinking that writers such as Noddings or Gilligan, and many other advocates of an ethic of care, have in mind.

A major plank of the objection to general (let alone universal)[7] rules which we find in such writers is that rules cannot be sensitive to the particularities of the individual case (especially, perhaps, in contexts of personal relationships - cf. Blum 1994). It should be clear that this objection to rules is not an objection to moral reasoning as such. If anything, the emphasis on how much one situation can differ from another, and the emphasis on response to the 'concrete' rather than the 'generalised' other (to use Benhabib's (1992) terminology), show how important moral reasoning (or 'thinking' if that term carries less baggage) is; we would need it much less if we could mechanically apply rules as algorithms.

Does all this mean that moral thought could dispense with rules altogether? There are various accounts by which this is possible: not only that given by some of the writers on a ethic of care, and not only Dancy's particularism, but also Hare's critical moral thinking. Hare (1981) shows that it is possible to carry through a whole piece of moral reasoning in terms of how far people's preferences are satisfied - the preferences, that is, of all who are or who might be affected by one's action. So with sufficient sensitivity to the particular circumstances, one would never need to refer to a moral rule (as conventionally understood) at all. And

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7 It is perhaps unfortunate that the distinction between 'general' and 'universal' which Hare (cf. 1981 p. 41) drew has not been more widely recognised. The distinction will be illustrated in the next chapter (note 3).

this is a conclusion which might well be congenial to writers such as Cox (quoted in the previous chapter) who are inclined to dismiss the role of rules altogether. On the other hand, it might well be worrying to others, who might want to say, in effect, that people doing their own moral thinking is all very well so long as they only do it within the framework of the rules (the kind of view which Cox was rejecting).

People who think it vital to keep the framework of rules may want this because they are afraid that if people do their own thinking they will go off the rails. In some quarters, existing oddly alongside an insistence on educational standards, there is a suspicion of people *thinking* (very much, or for themselves) when it comes to morality (see chapter 11 below). But the most fervent critics of 'relativism' or 'subjectivism' would hardly need to worry about people doing their own moral thinking, if they were doing it in something like the way suggested here. Suppose the question were 'Is it all right to assault an old man in the street for fun?' Is there any room for doubt that someone following the kind of reasoning suggested above would come to the answer 'No'? If people had been taught a rule (say, 'don't assault people for fun') could that make it any more certain that the answer would be No?

At this point in my own argument I have tried to answer a number of objections to moral rules; but far from showing that moral rules are necessary, I have granted that there is at least a theoretical possibility of our managing without them altogether. I need, then, to consider in what way, after all, there is still a role for them.

How rules and principles can work

Consider a person who, about to take some action which in itself seems perfectly innocuous, or even morally desirable, realises that taking this action is going to make it impossible to fulfil some - initially quite unconnected - promise she has made. (In the complexities of real life, it may have been far from obvious that there would turn out to be this incompatibility). If the deductive model were all there could be to moral thought, the reasoning

would have to go through: This would be breaking my promise; therefore I must not do it - end of question.

If this really were all there were to it in the particular case, the person could probably have got to the same conclusion - that she ought not to do the action - by a form of reasoning more like that mentioned above, in which a general rule does not figure at all. Does this mean there is no point in a rule? It does not. Rules have a degree of convenience that a more discursive process of reasoning does not have. The advantage this brings is not the saving of labour to the agent as such; if that were all, we could say 'people ought to be prepared to do a bit more thinking'; and no doubt often that is right. But people will not always have time to do the extra thinking; if they do, they will not in fact always be prepared to do it; and if they do it, they will sometimes not do it very well or will indulge in special pleading (cf. Hare 1981 p. 38). From the point of view of the function of morality(n), it may well be better that there are recognised rules than that people always have to do their own thinking from scratch (I shall say more on the importance of the rules being socially recognised in the next chapter).

Now suppose that our example of the promise-breaking is more complicated, with more factors to be considered. The person will now have realised one factor - that the action would involve breaking a promise - which she takes as relevant to her considerations; that may be the beginning of further thinking rather than the end of it. She may take the breaking of the promise to be *prima facie* wrong;[8] she may also think of other moral rules which seem to count in a different direction, and she may be aware of special circumstances which don't fall under any established rule. She will treat the possible breaking of the promise as one factor among others, and will try to think what is the best thing to do overall in the circumstances (this could sound like utilitarian reasoning, but what I have in mind is more the kind of contextual thinking of which the proponents of an ethic of

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8 The use of the term 'prima facie' in this context is owed to Ross (1930, 1939).

care write; it is interesting that accounts of this can indeed come out sounding like utilitarian reasoning).

This is the point at which it will be helpful to bring in explicitly the terminology of principles as well as that of rules. A distinction between these is not consistently marked in ordinary language but has been used by some writers in the philosophical literature. The distinction seems to me to be one worth marking, though the difference will be one of degree (I shall return to the terminological points in the next chapter).

I shall say that rules are relatively specific prescriptions for conduct, such as 'don't tell lies' or 'don't hit people'. The more concrete and specific they are, the more it may be possible for them to be used in a way approaching the algorithmic; but such possibilities will always be very limited. If the need for moral thought is granted at all, there are going to be the possibilities both of recognising sometimes that what a rule requires is indeterminate, and of recognising sometimes that it is better to make an exception to the rule. Only further thought will be able to deal with these possibilities; and the further thought is likely to bring in principles.

I shall say that a principle is a more general consideration which is to be treated as relevant in any moral thinking.[9] Examples of principles in this sense are 'respect for persons', 'fairness' and 'consideration of interests'. Clearly these are not rules in the sense of specific prescriptions for action. How, then, could they function? Recall that the model of moral reasoning I proposed above began:

Be aware of the ways in which what you are doing is going to affect other people. Think about this if it's not obvious.

In thinking about how one's conduct will affect others one needs some basis by which to count the effects on others as relevant or

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9 Among writers who have made the distinction in something like this way are: Beauchamp & Childress (1989); Grimshaw (1986), Peters (1981).

irrelevant, good or bad. After all, some effects on people may simply not matter. If I keep in mind such considerations as fairness and respect, then I have an idea of what I am looking for. This does not necessarily mean that one is rehearsing principles to oneself, let alone trying to deduce determinate conclusions from them. But even where the thinking in question is at its most situated and contextual, as in many of the situations which writers on an ethic of care focus on, the person in the situation has to see some factors as more salient than others. In this way he or she will be at least implicitly using certain principles (cf. Grimshaw 1986 p. 209). Using principles of fairness, respect and consideration of interests, though it may sound a rather abstract procedure if expressed in this way, may only mean that in any situation one is trying not to be unfair to people, to respect them and not to hurt anyone if possible - and that seems to me compatible with the most situated contextualised moral thinking. (The fact that many writers on an ethic of care do not use the terminology of principles may be due to their associating that terminology with a rather simplistic deductive model).[10]

Since this present discussion is framed within a consideration of morality(n) as being in important ways similar to law, it is worth noting that making the distinction between rules and principles does not undermine but rather reinforces the similarity (and in some respects continuity) between morality and law; indeed a very similar distinction between rules and principles is a major plank in Dworkin's (1977, pp. 22ff) account of legal reasoning. Dworkin's argument in outline is that judges in deciding cases cannot entirely be applying rules given in legislation; they sometimes have to appeal to principles which they perceive as

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[10] In developing his particularism, Dancy (1993) gives a role to principles, treating them as reminders of the sort of importance that a property *can* have in suitable circumstances. Dancy puts this forward as his own suggestion, but it has surely been anticipated by Peters, and indeed by many others: the difference being (only?) that whereas Peters would say that the considerations picked out by principles such as fairness or consideration of interests are always relevant, Dancy wants to say that they are likely to be relevant, but that we cannot know in advance that they will always be relevant. This enables Dancy to stick to his particularism, but rather at the expense of plausiblity.

being part of the morality underlying the legal system. These will be for the most part principles of justice, widely recognised even if not, at a given time, written into statutes, such as the principle that people should not profit from their own wrongdoing (Dworkin 1977 p.23; 1986 pp.15 ff.).[11]

There is yet a further way in which the analogy between moral and legal reasoning can be developed, beyond the deductive model. The idea that law is a system of rules binding on judges has led some commentators to suggest that when judges exercise their discretion in hard cases, not clearly covered by statute law, they are simply making up the law as they go along. This is analogous to the idea that a moral agent, in a dilemma in which the normal rules don't give a clear answer, can only decide subjectively, i.e. arbitrarily. Dworkin's (1986) response in effect is that in legal reasoning the notion of *what the law is* still functions as a regulative idea. When judges have to decide a case to which written rules and recorded precedent give no clear answer, they will appeal (even if they do not themselves describe it this way) to a broader sense of the purpose of the law and of the values inherent in it. In doing this they are engaging in an interpretive, hermeneutical, process, which, far from supposing that any answer is equally valid, presupposes that there is some interpretation which is more defensible than others. It is significant, again, that Dworkin in his writing on legal reasoning makes the kind of use of hermeneutical ideas which many recent writers on ethics have been making.

Neo-Aristotelians appealing to *phronesis*, proponents of Gadamerian hermeneutics, and proponents of an ethic of care can all agree that ethical thinking has to be situated and contextualised. That it is contextualised does not show that there is no point in seeking what is the right or the best thing to do; this can function as a regulative idea, a notional goal. Someone in a

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11 Much of the prevalent modern rhetoric of rights, I would suggest, functions in a similar way. While for some purposes it is important to distinguish, as analytic philosophers have been wont to do, between moral and legal rights, the notion of human rights functions at a level of principle in a way that spans both legal and moral thinking. See also Appendix 4.

complicated interpersonal situation, having to weigh up all kinds of factors, aware that it is going to be hard for someone not to get hurt, may well say to herself 'I wish I knew what is the right thing to do' or 'I wish I knew if I was acting for the best'. This does not imply that she thinks there is some deductive process that will turn out an answer at the bottom; it does imply that she does not think she is in a situation where any move is as good as any other and she might as well toss a coin. In recognising that this is so, she is implicitly, even if not explicitly, recognising the salience of factors which will inevitably have salience in other cases than this particular one - factors indeed which would be widely recognised to be salient. The language of principles functions to pick out - for certain purposes, when there is actually point in picking them out and looking at them - just this kind of factor.

Perhaps these arguments will reassure those who think that any reference to rules or principles must immediately shift moral thought onto an abstract plane, away from the concrete and particular level where (in the view of these critics) it should be located. The Standish objection has by now been answered; there need be no derogation from the responsibility of individual judgement which takes full account of circumstances. The Smith objection still needs some attention.

The pervasiveness of morality

The idea that 'the moral dimension colours the whole of our lives', and is not something which only obtrudes itself from time to time when we come up against a problem, is a common one within *TRAW*, and indeed in many arguments critical of rules and favourable towards caring or virtue ethics. Another of the contributors to *TRAW*, Mary Midgley, has in a different place expressed this idea by saying that getting outside morality is like getting outside the atmosphere - (Midgley 1991a p. 8; on the same theme see also Pincoffs 1983). It is a thought which I fully endorse. But I question the idea that recognising the salience of rules is in any way incompatible with recognising the all-pervasiveness of morality, and hence of moral thought. It is as if

rules were thought only to apply from time to time. But moral rules, on any view I am aware of (including, on the theoretical front, both Kantianism and utilitarianism) apply all the time; so far, then, they are perfectly compatible with the all-pervasiveness of morality. If critics think that reference to rules encourages the idea that the moral dimension only becomes salient from time to time, it must be something else about rules which they have in mind.

Perhaps the idea is that it is, for any one agent, only occasionally that any question of following or not following the rule comes up.[12] Here a lot may turn on what is meant by 'the question comes up'. Perhaps the critics have in mind a rule like 'keep your promises'; if one has made a promise to do something at a particular time, then it is at that time that one has to fulfil one's promise; so it might seem that outside of that time the rule has no salience. Even for a rule of promise-keeping, this is a very limited view: the need to keep a promise may have other implications for how the agent lives his or her life; the acknowledgement of the rule may affect how far someone is or is not willing to enter into promises; and some promises do not have the limited temporary character of, say, promising to return a book on a particular day. Consider, though the example is somewhat culture-relative, the promises involved in marriage. Or consider truth-telling as a moral rule. Since most of us rarely go for more than a few hours at a time without communicating something to someone, the possibility of not telling the truth is constantly there. If we need a rule to tell us not to lie, that rule is one that is constantly salient.

But do we need such a rule? Not in the sense that we have to be constantly articulating it to ourselves. But a rule - or again, a principle - can become internalised, so that we do not constantly have to be reciting it to ourselves, but would nevertheless notice if something we might do was liable to go against it. Following a rule, or not breaking a rule, can become in a certain sense a

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12 Even if this were so, it would not diminish the social importance of rules, which will be my concern in the next chapter.

matter of habit.[13] Something that Peters realised and stressed more clearly than most writers on moral education was that the rules can recede into the background, only occasionally having to be brought to mind. But as a part of the background, they can still be a vital feature of our moral lives. They mean that we do not have to be constantly thinking about every situation anew, trying all the time to be sensitive to all the features of every situation we are in and responding to it *a b initio.* As Peters (1981, p. 98) put it

'Surely the importance of established habits in the moral life is manifest. Life would be very exhausting if, in moral situations, we always had to reflect, deliberate, and make decisions.'

Adding only that every situation is a moral situation (and 'every day is judgement day', as Smith puts it - *TRAW* p. 116), we can say that it is only the existence of a background of habit capable of taking us through most of these situations, that frees us to respond seriously and even afresh to situations which really do turn out to demand something more than habit.

This means that while an individual agent may only occasionally refer to rules explicitly, reference to rules *within a philosophical account of the moral life,* far from suggesting that morality is only relevant to 'special occasions' (as in Smith's claim above), actually supports the idea that the moral dimension is all-pervasive.

Rules and virtues

It might be thought that in saying that rules often recede into the background in an individual's moral life I am almost removing them from the moral landscape after all. But this would be to neglect the large role that rules can still have in public, including public educational, contexts - the topic of the next chapter. Here it is worth saying a little about the relationship between two kinds of account of the moral life which can be expressed using a language of virtues and a language of rules. There can seem to be two quite different accounts, if they are expressed this way: on a rule-based account, a person goes (or should go) through life

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13 Cf. Peters 1981 pp. 95-104

constantly referring to certain rules and consciously following them. On a virtue-based account, a person goes (or should go) through life with a set of dispositions which have already been formed, and in the light of which she recognises the salient features of whatever particular situations she is in and responds accordingly.

It is possible now to see that this contrast is overdrawn. If rules often operate as a background factor then they can be operating within the dispositions of the virtuous agent, as we saw in the case of the virtue relating to anger. If we start, in our account of moral life, from rules, then we have to say that rules cannot be applied mechanically; indeed the agent who has internalised certain rules has to have the sensitivity and judgement to see what is compatible with the rules in the particular circumstances. Thus our account begins to move towards a virtue account. If we start, in our account of moral life, from virtues, then we have to say that the person who possesses certain virtues will be aware of features of situations which are of general relevance, and will be aware of public expectations in relation to these features; the person of virtue is, after all, far from being a subjectivist. Starting from either end, the two accounts may well converge (see also my remarks on Hursthouse in the next chapter).

Thoughts of this nature presumably underlie White's view that 'the distinction between virtues and rules could well be eroded' (*TRAW* p. 23). This ought to be no surprise to anyone thinking about moral education without a preconception that rules and virtues can never meet. Certainly there is a strong precedent in Peters, for though, as I have pointed out (in note 1 to the previous chapter), he gave a good deal of attention to rules, he also had a lot to say about virtues (in articles written well before *After Virtue*). And Peters saw his account as being in the tradition of Aristotle, whom he read as arguing that virtues have to be developed through first initiating people into rule-following.

This does not mean that there is no distinction to be drawn between an ethic of rules and an ethic of virtues; it does mean

that there is not a great gulf between them. As Griffin (1996, p. 113) puts it:

'Most moral views - indeed all plausible ones - make the virtues important. So that is not enough to qualify those views as a form of what we nowadays call 'virtue ethics'. What is definitive of virtue ethics, as I take it, is that it makes virtues not just important to, but in some sense basic in, the moral structure; they are so deep in the structure that they can be said to generate or to animate the rest of it.'[14]

A similar point has been made within philosophy of education by Steutel (1997), who argues that virtually any approach to moral education - including Kohlberg's - could be construed as a virtue approach, but that only some are based in virtue ethics. But the distinction between virtue ethics and other forms, as a distinction about what it is that 'generate[s] or animate[s] the whole of an ethical position' is a distinction within moral philosophy. In considering morality(n) - which by definition would not be the whole of anyone's ethical life - we need a language which is susceptible of broad public understanding and agreement. In the light of the last few chapters we can see, I think, that while a language of virtues must have a place, the primary language for public moral discourse is likely to remain one of norms (including both rules and principles), though some of these norms may themselves refer to feeling and motivation[15]. It is time now to attempt something like an overview of the public role of moral norms, beginning with their place in moral education.

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14 He adds that virtue ethics need not make virtues fundamental in the whole structure of *values*. The point is similar to one I made in Chapter 4 about morality(n). Both our thinking about norms and our thinking about virtues have their point or meaning by their relation to what matters in life.

15 An example is one of the norms Griffin most often cites - 'don't be cruel' - since cruelty cannot be specified without reference to the motivation of the agent. I shall return to this example in the next chapter.

Chapter Nine
The public role of moral norms

Rules in moral education

The role of rules in moral education has often been recognised by moral philosophers, but sometimes with the implication that this role is rather unimportant from the moral philosopher's point of view. Thus Geoffrey Warnock (1971 p. 51):

'it is often said, reasonably enough, that the moral education of children at any rate may include, at a certain stage, the promulgation to them by parents and teachers of rules for their conduct on certain moral matters..... However, if it is to be admitted that there are moral rules in *this* sense, it must surely be added at once that they are of no great theoretical importance.'

They are of no great theoretical importance because, as Warnock goes on to argue, the need for such rules rests only on the contingent fact that children at a certain stage are incapable of appreciating the underlying moral reasons for behaving in one way rather than another.[1] This is perhaps enough to show the relativity of 'theoretical importance'; what is unimportant to the Oxford moral philosopher of a certain era may be rather central to the theorist of moral education. Schneewind's (1997, p. 179) summary of the attitude of some proponents of virtue ethics seems to encapsulate Warnock's view also:

'We may educate children into virtue by teaching them some simple rules, but mature moral agents do not need them'

This invites the obvious riposte 'what about the immature ones?' Even if it were true that a degree of moral maturity removed the need for rules, this can hardly be a matter of only peripheral interest for philosophy of education. Philosophy of education needs to enquire into what might be meant by 'immature' and 'mature' in this context. The term suggests a development over time, and certainly many theorists of moral education have subscribed to the view not only that individuals over time come to

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1 See also my remarks on Warnock's position in Chapter 7 above.

be more able to make rational moral judgements, but also that some individuals get further in this development than others. This sort of view may be especially associated with Kohlberg, but Peters also subscribed to it: 'a great number of people do not develop to a rational level of morality' (1981 p. 157). How far one subscribes to this view - how great one thinks the number of people is who do not develop to a rational level - partly depends, of course, on how much is written into the notion of 'rational'.

If we are interested in promoting a shared public understanding of morality, we will want the understanding in question to be widely distributed; hence we will also want it to be of such a nature that it can be widely distributed. Some trade-off between depth and breadth of understanding may be unavoidable. Thus if we were to interpret 'the public understanding of morality' in such a way that no one counts as understanding morality who is not able to follow and understand the arguments of Kant's *Groundwork*, we might find that this understanding is very narrowly spread - which would defeat the object of promoting public understanding. At the other extreme, if we were to aim at no more than the ability to recite certain received rules in a standard formulation, while we might find this aim could be achieved across a broad band of the population, there would be little ground for claiming that we were promoting understanding.

There would be no good grounds for trying to limit public understanding to either a language of norms or a language of virtues, particularly given the interactions and overlaps that we have seen between the different forms of evaluation. But it is my contention that a language of norms will have a certain priority if we are to have a way of talking about morality which can be publicly accessible and transparent without being too simplistic. (But the norms will be of a variety of kinds, including some which refer to feeling and motivation.)

Given a concern with shared public understanding we can see additional reason for putting some weight on rules, as articulated norms of conduct, in moral education. Whatever the outcome of

the debate about how far rules are needed in the moral development and education of each individual,[2] they provide a means by which a degree of convergence between the moral education of different individuals can be expected. They may not be the only conceivable means; it is possible that a society making a considerable use of a language of virtues could have a publicly-acknowledged consensus on the virtues which it expects parents and other carers to try to engender in children. But as I have already suggested in Chapter 5, there are reasons to think, at any rate in a large and diverse society, that a language of virtues may be less effective in this respect. In any case, if Hursthouse (1996, p.27) is right, even people thinking primarily in terms of virtues would be likely to use rules of conduct in the moral upbringing of young children:

'....why should a proponent of virtue ethics deny the significance of such mother's-knee rules as 'Don't lie', 'Keep promises', 'Don't take more than your fair share', 'Help others'?..... Virtue ethicists want to emphasise the fact that, if children are to be taught to be honest, they must be taught to prize the truth, and that *merely* teaching them not to lie will not achieve this end.[3] But they need not deny that to achieve this end teaching them not to lie is useful, even indispensable.'

The point, then, about teaching rules to young children is not just that it takes them through a certain necessary stage of development individually; it is that, if the same publicly acknowledged rules are taught to all children, this makes it more likely that there will, as those children grow up, be a publicly shared morality. And to the extent that there is a publicly shared morality at any one time, it will be more likely that parents will bring up their children in that morality; and so on from generation to generation (I have yet to consider the ways in which the rules can change). The society in general, however, has no way of ensuring that all parents will bring up their children in the same

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2 Cf. Baier (1985) pp. 222 ff. for a contrary view to Peters'; and Straughan (1989) Chapter 1 for an argument with which I largely agree.

3 Notice that nothing that I, or, for instance, Peters, have said in putting weight on rules has denied this.

set of rules (though parenting classes might make a difference); this is one argument against those who claim that moral education is properly the business of families and should be no concern of schools.

It is perhaps not necessary to argue at length as to why it is desirable that there should be a publicly shared morality. If it is desirable that there should be morality(n), it is desirable that it should be widely acknowledged, or it will not be able to do its job. Part of its job is, of course, to counteract various selfish or thoughtless motivations by which individuals might act in ways detrimental to others or to co-operation with others. But this task is not carried out only by individuals responding directly to the requirements of morality(n); it also happens partly through individuals being aware of the expectations of other people - provided those expectations have themselves been formed in accordance with morality(n). The norms of morality(n) may be initially transmitted through education, but they can also be reinforced through being referred to when appropriate in the discourse of adult members of the society. Part of the way in which this happens is through criticism.

Criticism

Criticism itself, of course, is viewed by many people as suspect; to make any moral criticism of another is viewed as being 'judgmental' or 'moralistic'. The situation is well brought out by Midgley (1991a, p. 1):

'"*But surely it's always wrong to make moral judgements?*" This ..... was spoken ardently and confidently, with no expectation that it might be questioned.....a moral platitude, something so obvious that it need only be mentioned to be accepted.'

Suppose A says that B is being moralistic or judgemental in criticising C. A is undeniably making a criticism herself. Can she offer any interpretation of her own conduct by which it escapes from the self-referential application of her own norm that one should not criticise? She might try this: what is wrong with B's criticism of C is that B is appealing to norms which he, B, holds but

which other people, including C, may not share. A, however, in criticising B for making this sort of criticism, takes herself to be appealing to a norm which she believes to be publicly shared - namely that one should not make criticisms of others which are based on norms which are *not* publicly shared

If this kind of analysis is on the right lines, then even someone who is wary of being moralistic or judgemental can acknowledge that there is a role for criticism *which refers to norms which are publicly shared.* And it is hard to see how morality(n) could function without the possibility of such criticism. Morality(n) loses its point if it makes no difference to people's conduct. And one of the ways in which it makes a difference to people's conduct is *via* reference to its norms in interpersonal communication.

Suppose I say to you 'You shouldn't do that; it would be breaking your promise.' This is criticism, albeit criticism of a proposed action which you have not yet taken. It is intended to make a difference to what you do, by appealing to a norm which I assume you already recognise (there is also an assumption here that you might be *moved* by the thought that the action is against the norm - this raises questions about motivation and recognising the authority of norms which I shall take up in the next two chapters). The reason why I can assume that you already recognise this norm - even if I do not have any special knowledge of you personally - is that I take the norm to be publicly recognised.

Suppose instead that I criticise some action you have already taken. Is this pointless, because it can no longer affect your future conduct? Not necessarily, because the fact that one action of yours has been criticised might affect the likelihood of your doing something similar in future. Notice that in making such a criticism, whether of past or possible future action, there are various things I need not be doing. I need not be taking a stance of moral superiority. I am appealing to a norm which I take to be shared; I acknowledge tacitly, and might acknowledge explicitly, that it applies to me as well. I am not claiming that I have never gone against this norm myself. Thus, I am not *necessarily* being

hypocritical (the fear of being judged hypocritical may be one common reason for reluctance to criticise). I am also not condemning you as a person. And I am not claiming to have the last word on the matter. I can be willing to listen to your response 'Yes, I know it's breaking a promise [here you acknowledge that you do recognise the norm], but in the circumstances.....'. You may well be right.

This is not to say that it is desirable for people to go around constantly criticising each other. And it is not to deny that when criticism is made there are better and worse ways of doing it. To judge when it is appropriate to criticise, and when it is not, to see how to do it and in what words (if in words at all); and if in words, to do it in the right tone of voice, and so on, requires all the *phronesis* and sensitivity which any neo-Aristotelian, particularist or proponent of an ethic of care could wish for. No wonder, then, that some people might prefer to treat 'never criticise anyone' as an exceptionless rule. But the norms of morality(n) not only need to be learned, which will inevitably involve parents and others sometimes saying to children 'You shouldn't do that' or 'You shouldn't have done that' and explaining why; they also, as I suggested above, need to be reinforced, even for adults. And these last two points come together, since if children were never aware of norms being used by adults in criticism of adults, morality could come to seem to children to be an imposition by adults, which they could shake off when they themselves become adults.

There can be no sharp cut-off point here between education and the rest of life. And this in practice means that a willingness both to offer and receive criticism which is intended in a constructive spirit is desirable throughout life. What goes with this is a disposition to consider whether one's own conduct is justifiable in relation to publicly acknowledged norms; and to be prepared to discuss with others whether it is or not. One of the problems about anger, as mentioned in Chapter 6, is that the angry person, focusing his or her attention on a perceived slight to himself or

herself, can too easily lose sight of the public norms by which the angry reaction might be shown to be or not to be justified.

The *public* aspect of norms, then, is vital as a basis for criticism which is not to be purely 'personal' in the sense of *ad hominem* (which may well be resented as such). The need for a publicly acknowledged reference point does not rule out an appeal to virtues as a basis for criticism, and we often do criticise in this language. ('That was mean of you'; 'You could have been more generous', and so on.) But there are difficulties in criticising on the basis of virtue-assessments. It may be unclear, and not necessarily publicly agreed, how high a standard is being expected, or where the mean in some quality is (cf. Chapters 5 and 6). And we cannot assume that any one virtue is equally easy for one person to acquire as for another; to that extent, criticising a person for not possessing a given virtue can appear unfair. Publicly acknowledged rules of conduct, on the other hand, set up a standard that we assume everyone is capable of meeting (though we may also acknowledge mitigating circumstances, on which I shall say more in the next chapter).

These points on the role of criticism show part of the sense in which morality(n) is, as it is sometimes put, a matter of public morality. But the term 'public morality' can be misleading, since it can suggest that the morality in question applies only in public life. It is important that morality(n) should not be so restricted (recall that in the last chapter I endorsed the all-pervasiveness of morality). So publicly acknowledged norms can provide a basis for criticism even within close personal relationships. This is certainly an area where care is needed. It can become too easy to criticise (why otherwise would it have become 'a moral platitude' that one ought not to?) People can ruin relationships by getting into the habit of doing it all the time. But it is just because of the dangers of indiscriminate criticism within personal relationships that the distinction between norms which are publicly shared and standards which might be particular to an individual, or to a background the individual shares only with certain others, can be vital. It is, for instance, the distinction between 'You should not

have said that because it was a lie' and 'You should not have said that because it's not the sort of thing my parents would have said'.

In a plural society, many relationships, whether entered into through choice or not (the latter for instance will include many relationships between work colleagues) will be between people who do not necessarily share the same background of assumptions about values and goals. It cannot be assumed that they will agree on all issues of values; if we are thinking of morality or ethics in the broadest sense, the sheer range of possibilities is so great that total agreement is likely to be the exception. Part of the role of morality(n) is to provide a set, in effect, of working assumptions which all parties can be assumed to share. In many past societies arguably the existence of such shared working assumptions could be left to look after itself; it would seem rash now to assume that it can be.

Norms, rules and principles

I have been arguing that a language of norms is suitable for the maintenance of a publicly shared morality(n). I also said above that goals for public understanding should be neither too simplistic nor too ambitious. I want to argue that something more than just shared acknowledgement of a list of norms, all on the same level, should be possible - not only because some norms may rightly be seen as more important than others, but also because different sorts of norm stand in a different relationship to people's conduct.

At this point I need to return to some issues of terminology, because education for public understanding of morality will have to address some important distinctions and hence will have to consider the terms in which they may be expressed and by which they may potentially be obscured. It may well be, for example, that if there were greater consistency in the marking of a difference between rules and principles there would be less confusion about whether there can or cannot be *absolute* rules (or principles).

I have been using the word 'norms' as the broadest of the terms 'norms', 'rules' and 'principles', broad enough to include conventions which may not be verbalised. We can imagine, for instance, that in the early human society mentioned in Chapter 4 certain conventions or expectations might have become established before the language had even developed in which it would have been possible to articulate them. Though usage of the terms is probably neither fixed not consistent, we are more likely to speak of rules when we have in mind norms that can be and sometimes, perhaps often, are articulated in words, particularly if they are expressed grammatically as imperatives.

I also introduced in the last chapter the distinction between rules and principles, where a principle is a broader, more general consideration, a rule more specific in its action-guiding force. This distinction is connected, I think, with the fact that we are more likely to speak of a rule when we are dealing with imperative formulations. It is not that the grammatical imperative form cannot be used to express broad principles - for instance, rather than speaking of the principle of non-maleficence (principles are often referred to in this way by a single word or phrase) we can say 'do no harm'; but 'do no harm' is so broad as to give little indication as to what a person is actually to do or not do. In contrast, the imperative 'don't hit anyone' is more specific. There seems more point in the imperative form here, and we are more likely to speak of this prescription as a rule.[4]

I also said that the rule/principle distinction is one of degree. Clearly there are degrees of specificity and generality, and even if we try to use the terms consistently there may well be cases where we are uncertain whether to speak of a rule or a principle (it is also unlikely in such cases that much will hang on which term we use.) It also seems possible for the same consideration to be treated more as a rule or more as a principle. This can be illustrated by the example used before, of promise-keeping. In simple enough cases, the norm of promise-keeping can function as

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4 The example can also be used to illustrate Hare's distinction between the general and the universal. 'Do no harm' is more general, 'don't hit anyone' more specific; but both are equally universal.

a rule - it can be straightforwardly followed. In my further development of the example, where the person realised that what she was thinking of doing would amount to breaking a promise, she took this into account as one factor among others. The idea that the breaking of a promise is a negative factor in a situation, something to be avoided if possible, functioned then more in the way I have spoken of principles as operating - it picked out one feature of the situation which was relevant but not conclusive. In other words, it is possible for someone to treat a consideration as a rule or as a principle, depending on how much discretion they see it as allowing.

The linguistic situation, however, is still more complicated, because we have such locutions as 'on principle' (which is different from '*in* principle') and 'as a matter of principle'. If someone says that as a matter of principle they will never do such-and-such, then because of some rather general consideration they are in fact 'making it a rule' (an exceptionless rule) not to do such-and-such. Safety considerations provide an interesting comparison here. Safety in the workplace is a very important principle of great generality. There are times when the chances of safety on a particular occasion will not in fact be compromised if someone does not wear a hard hat on entering a building site (work has finished for the day; there is no piece of equipment installed which is higher than foundation level; the person concerned is only going just inside the perimeter of the site). Nevertheless the rule 'no one is to enter without wearing a hard hat' may be considered one that is to be applied without exception - roughly because if any exceptions are allowed, the risks of someone sometime allowing themselves an exception which turns out to be disastrous are too great.[5] The person going just inside the perimeter may say that as a matter of principle he is going to wear a hard hat (whereas if he said that 'as a rule' he wears a hard hat, he would be suggesting that he would be likely to make an exception from time to time).

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5 There are, of course, parallels here with discussions in the literature of act- and rule- utilitarianism. The example used is not morally neutral; indeed if there is a professional ethics of the construction industry this is surely part of it.

A further point is that, as the last chapter should have made clear, we can use the words 'rules', 'principles', or 'norms' - and indeed others, including 'standards' - for what can be internalised. But we are probably more likely to speak of principles or norms, rather that rules, when referring to something which often operates without being consciously verbalised at all.

The point of this excursus into the vagaries of the English language is partly to warn the reader not to be too concerned about thinking up counterexamples to my own use of the terms: there are always going to be counterexamples. A more important point is that education for shared public understanding needs to take account of ordinary usage. It would be too much to expect formal education to promote a completely consistent usage of the words we have been considering. It is not, I think, too much to expect formal education to direct people's attention to the distinction, which still seems to me the fundamental one, between broad considerations which are always relevant but which do not in most circumstances mandate specific forms of conduct, and prescriptions which are fairly specific in what they prescribe or prohibit. With this distinction in place one can also make a distinction within the latter category: between rules to which, when general principles require it, one may make an exception, and rules which, precisely because of the general principles, are to be treated as exceptionless.

Are there absolutes after all?

An interesting consequence of all this is that, if there are any norms which are (to be treated as) absolutes in the sense that no exceptions are ever to be made (cf. the discussion above in Chapter 7), they are either very broad principles or quite specific rules. At the broad end of the spectrum there are principles like 'consider people's interests'; this does not tell us that there cannot be occasions when, for other reasons, it is right to do something which goes against people's interests - so it does not, for instance, tell us that violent action is always wrong - but it does tell us that there are never any circumstances (what kinds of circumstance

could they be?) in which one should give no consideration to people's interests at all. (This in turn does not mean that one must be actively at every moment thinking about other people's interests; it does mean that one should always be receptive to the possibility of other people's interests being affected - cf. Scheffler 1992 p. 32.)

At a similar broad level of generality there are norms which refer to the motivational aspects of actions, not just their externally observable features. Thus one of Griffin's examples of a 'maximally reliable' moral norm is 'don't be cruel'.[6] This does not just mean 'don't cause pain', which would have no plausible claim to be an absolute norm (doctors and dentists could hardly be expected to adhere to this one). It means something like 'don't cause pain for your own satisfaction' (Griffin 1996 pp. 79-80; McGinn 1997 pp. 61 ff.). Apart from far-fetched philosophers' constructions, it is more difficult to think of exceptions to this. ('Sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind' does not mean 'sometimes in order to be kind you have to cause pain for your own pleasure'.)

At the other end of the spectrum there are likely to be some quite specific rules which have claims to be exceptionless. Consider the following: 'Never shake a baby'. This does not usually occur in any putative list of moral rules.[7] It might seem more like one of Kant's imperatives of skill (1948 p. 79), one variety of hypothetical imperative: 'if you want to look after a baby, never shake it', where the imperative is grounded in knowledge of the dangers in shaking a baby. So one might think that any well-intentioned person in charge of a baby will have the sense not to shake it; assuming either a minimal attitude of care for the baby, or respect for a principle of non-maleficence, or both, the person concerned will avoid the dangerous action.

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6 Here the languages of norms of conduct and the language of virtues seem to overlap, but there is still a difference. Griffin's norm means 'don't act in a cruel way'; not 'don't be a cruel person'.

7 It would not have occurred to me but for the 1997 trial of the nanny Louise Woodward for the murder of a baby in her care. In the remarks I make below no opinion is implied (nor do I think I am in any position to have one) about Woodward's guilt or innocence.

But, as Kant is well aware, an imperative of skill can equally be turned to different ends: even the grisly: 'if you want to kill a baby, without making it too obvious, try shaking it'. Why not treat the rule itself, 'never shake a baby' as a moral imperative? Even though it is far from being at the kind of broad level of generality and abstraction from context of Kant's own categorical imperative, this could reasonably be taken to be a rule to which no exception is ever to be made. Of course, any philosopher (with a certain sort of training) will easily be able to think up a counterexample: if I don't shake this baby you are going to press the button which will set off the explosion which will trigger the earthquake under the maternity hospital..... and so on. But as Hare long ago argued (1981, ch. 8), the possibility of imagining counterexamples, and even the slight possibility that such a counterexample might one day become reality, is not a good basis for refraining from promulgating a rule as one to which no exception is to be made.

It may be asked what is the point of a rule such as 'never shake a baby', if broader norms such as respect for life and non-maleficence are in place. The point is that the more specific rule may be what is needed in a specific kind of situation. Someone who does have respect for life and who has no wish to do harm may nevertheless not realise that shaking a baby may be so bad; or if he or she has learned of the possible causal connection between shaking and possible injury or death for a baby, may nevertheless not call that connection to mind, under stress, at the appropriate moment. Whereas if that specific rule, 'never shake a baby' has been learned, it may prevent an action which the more general principle would not have prevented.

Principles in public discourse

If that was one end of the spectrum of specificity of rules, at the other end, to come back to that, are the very broad principles such as non-maleficence and consideration of interests. These can have a different kind of function, in that they are publicly acknowledged as reference points. The idea, for instance, of

respect for human life often functions in this sort of way. It does not resolve debates about abortion or capital punishment, military responses to terrorism, or how far the police should be armed, but it stands as a factor which serious debate cannot ignore.

A set of four very general principles - beneficence, non-maleficence, respect for autonomy, and justice - have been influential in health care ethics, especially through their advocacy and dissemination by Beauchamp and Childress.[8] In recent years there has been a tendency in that field to give more attention to an ethic of care, and to the virtues which it is desirable that practitioners in health care should develop. The reasons for the (partial) shift away from a principle-based ethic towards a virtues- or care- based one are the reasons familiar in moral philosophy more generally: that practitioners need to make decisions in all the complexities of concrete situations, responding to the needs of individuals, so that the answers given by broad principles may be too abstract, or conflicting, or insufficiently determinate.

What is less often noted is that broad principles of the Beauchamp and Childress kind may have an important role in public policy debate about health care. The general public - which in a sense, in relation to health care, includes politicians - are not in the front line of care for patients; they cannot, in the relevant sense, exercise care for patients - or display some of the virtues relevant to doing so - however important they think it that care should be exercised. For the general public, to say that nurses and doctors should be caring people is itself to talk at the level of general principles - which is the only level at which the general public can talk when considering health care policy.[9] Perhaps some would

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[8] Beauchamp & Childress's text *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* has gone through numerous editions since its first publication in 1979. The four principles mentioned above have remained central in the text, but it has also - responsive to developments in moral philosophy - given progressively more space to virtues and caring.

[9] Arguably the need for a caring attitude and responsiveness to individual circumstances should be added to the four principles of Beauchamp & Childress - or alternatively it may already be covered by those four principles, sensitively interpreted.

argue, precisely for this reason, coupled with a distrust of argument at the level of general principles, that all health care decisions should be left to the practitioners in the front line. But not only would that probably be quite impossible in practice, it would also go against the idea that a liberal democracy requires some sort of public oversight over the work of professionals. Whether that idea must be accepted can in turn be debated; and that debate too will invoke general principles. Discourse at the level of general principles is surely inescapable in public policy matters.

It is no part of my argument to suggest that if there is public agreement on broad principles there will necessarily be agreement on the details of practice. Broad principles keep open great scope for disagreement - partly because it is rarely possible in any case to deduce specific and incontrovertible conclusions from the principles, and partly because principles on which there is agreement at a verbal level may still be open to very different interpretation.[10]

That principles such as 'respect for human life' are open to different interpretations is not, as I see it, an objection to appealing to such principles, especially if the possibilities of dialogue are taken seriously (cf. Haydon 1999d). In moral discourse, people *may* discover that they share an understanding of what it is to respect human life; if so, they may go on from there in attempting to reach agreement on more particular matters. Or they may discover that they interpret 'respect for human life' in significantly different ways; but even that will have clarified what is at issue, and so will have constituted a progression in mutual understanding

Even, then, where differences remain at a deep level (which may be true of some of the differences between certain more-or-less fundamentalist religious outlooks and certain more-or-less godless liberal outlooks), there is the possibility of an increase in mutual

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10 This point is made in a discussion of the SCAA work by Smith & Standish in *TRAW* pp. 143-144. I am not sure how far Smith and Standish see this as an objection to thinking in terms of general principles at all.

understanding. Far from public moral discourse being insubstantial or trivial, it is only public moral discourse that makes such an increase in understanding possible.

I suggest it is in this light that we should read the Statement of Values produced by the SCAA Forum (see Appendix 3). This Statement contains many prescriptions which are clearly open to interpretation, such as 'we should respect others, including children' and 'we should understand and carry out our responsibilities as citizens'. Some critics have seen such statements as merely platitudinous. But we should see them, I suggest, as having a function in interpersonal discourse in the sorts of way mentioned above. They need for the most part to be read as principles rather than rules, and as such they are reference points which, at least at a verbal level, would be widely agreed on. Within a school, as more widely, people may find that they agree on an interpretation of them and can go on from there; or they may, in the attempt to clarify the interpretation and application of such prescriptions, come to a better self-understanding and mutual understanding. Thus consideration of prescriptions such as these (taken seriously because there *is* widespread agreement on them at some level) will itself be a contribution to and enrichment of public moral discourse.

Part IV

Making morality(n) work

I take the arguments of Parts III to be sufficient to allow me, in the remainder of the thesis, to assume a language of norms, even though some of the questions remaining would arise for morality(n) even if it were articulated in some other way.

This thesis is about the public understanding of morality, and more specifically, of morality(n). I do not have in mind a detached understanding, as of a phenomenon of purely intellectual interest. Rather, I hope that morality(n) can be understood *as something to be taken seriously.* In Part IV I consider a group of questions which need to be answered if it is to be understood in this way. Why should anyone take notice of it, as it bears on their own conduct? Does it incorporate any understanding of moral motivation? Can it be seen as having any authority? And how far can we suppose that there could be agreement on its content? In answering these questions I begin to show the role that schools can have in promoting and maintaining morality(n). I argue for seeing citizenship education as having an important role, and I say something about the implications of expecting teachers to assume a responsibility for the promotion of an understanding of morality(n).

Chapter Ten
Moral motivation

Motivation in law and morality(n)

If people don't violate moral norms, does it matter *why* they don't violate them? Morality(n), like the law, expects people to act in certain ways and refrain from acting in certain others, but does not demand that they do so out of one kind of motivation rather than another. This is another of the ways in which, for public purposes, the language of norms may seem preferable to that of virtues. As Schneewind (1997, p. 180) has put it: 'The rules or principles can be known and applied by someone who has no desire or concern for acting on them'.

The points I made at the end of the last chapter may reinforce this view. Where rules or principles are functioning in a public discourse on policy issues, it is indeed possible for someone to know and apply the principles without any desire to act on them, since the people who apply the principles - in the sense of thinking what kind of action they require - and the people from whom the principles require some kind of action, may be different persons. However, I did not claim that this kind of role in public discourse is the only role for publicly acknowledged principles; to the contrary, the norms of morality(n) have their primary importance to the extent that people do act in accordance with them.

There are still many possible motivations which can lie behind people's acting in accordance with the norms - if this means, acting in ways which do not violate the norms. On different occasions I may be acting from unthinking habit, or from calculated self-interest, or from affection for another, or 'on the spur of the moment' for no articulated reasons, and on any of these occasions I might be acting in ways which do not in fact go against any of the norms. To that extent, one might say that it should not matter, from the point of view of morality(n), what my motivation is, provided my action is in fact in accordance with the norms.

However, morality(n) could not function if it were only a matter of chance whether people's actions are or are not in accordance with the norms. People can act in accordance with the norms without consciously acting *o n* the norms[1]. It is not a matter of logical necessity that the more people consciously act *on* the norms, the more they will act in ways that are in fact in accordance with the norms (people might be so ineffective in doing what they are trying to do, that they would have acted in accordance with the norms more often if they had not been trying to). Nevertheless, it is a reasonable assumption in practice that there will be many occasions when people's actions would not be in accordance with the norms were it not that they were consciously acting on the norms.

This means that for morality(n) to function it must be possible for the recognition that something is required by the norms to be a motivation (at least partial) for action. It must after all be possible for people to have some sort of 'desire or concern' to act on moral norms.[2]

From this there are two implications for education. First, that the public understanding of morality(n) will have to include understanding of the kind of motivation which morality(n) sometimes needs. Second, that educators should be trying not just to promote a detached understanding of this kind of motivation, but to make it probable (so far as this can be done compatibly with their role as educators) that people will in fact be susceptible to this kind of motivation (though not only to this kind).[3]

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1 A parallel distinction is important both in Aristotle's ethics (cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4) and Kant's (cf. *Groundwork*, e.g. Ch. 1, 397 (Paton p. 63).

2 Nothing in my argument requires that all motivation has to be construable in terms of desires; cf. Scheffler 1992 Ch. 5.

3 Both points are needed, because it may be possible both for someone to be motivated in a certain way without understanding their own motivation, and for someone to understand a certain form of motivation - what it involves, how it is possible - without actually being motivated in that way themselves.

So far we have not seen that a desire or concern to act on moral norms should be of any particular kind. (Part of the contrast between norm- and virtue-based accounts is that on norm-based accounts there is no one particular kind of motivation which morality(n) is exclusively concerned with, whereas a virtue-based account is focusing on some particular kind of motivation in the case of each virtue it distinguishes.) So far, the position of morality(n) is still parallel to that of the law. It matters to the functioning of the law that the existence of legal norms should sometimes enter into people's motivation - that people can have some sort of desire or concern to act according to the law - but there is more than one form this desire or concern can take. To mention the most obvious (which are not mutually exclusive), people may obey the law because they do not want the inconvenience and sanctions which may ensue on their breaking it, or because they respect the law and think that they ought not to break it.

One way in which morality(n) differs from the law is that the norms of morality(n) - in cases where they are not also legal norms - are not backed up by coercive sanctions. Some theorists would still say that morality(n) works through sanctions of a kind, though these might be sanctions only of more-or-less public disapproval. It is an important difference, though, that legal sanctions are designed to be hard to take for anyone with certain common human motivations (people don't like being locked up or forced to hand over large amounts of money), whereas it is possible for people to be indifferent or defiant towards the disapproval of others which is not itself coercive. The desire or concern to avoid coercive sanctions, which are usually accompanied also by social disapproval, is not a sufficiently effective motivation to deter all action in violation of the law; it is not to be expected, then, that avoidance of social disapproval alone would be a sufficient motivation to deter all action in violation of norms which are not backed up by coercive sanctions.

The other motivation for obeying the law which I distinguished above also has its analogue for morality: the motivation which is operating when someone refrains from doing what they want to do because they think they ought not to (or think it would be wrong), or does what they are reluctant to do because they believe it is the right thing to do (or they ought to do it). As the writer of a book on moral education for the popular market puts it:

'The great battleground of morality is between obligation and desire. When somebody says 'I ought to do so and so' we understand that she doesn't really want to do it, or would prefer to so something else, but feels she should nonetheless.' (Houghton 1998 p. 59)

In her first sentence, this writer is perhaps expressing a view of the matter which has been influenced by a certain kind of theory - though not only Kantian-style philosophy; we might cite much of mainstream religious traditions too. Arguably, this use of 'obligation' as a noun form of 'ought' is itself a philosopher's input. But certainly it is not a philosophical invention that people use the word 'ought' to express something which they themselves see as pulling against their own wishes or inclinations (though this does not preclude their acknowledging that they may in some sense want to do what they think they ought to do). And it is, I think, a fact of experience that people do sometimes act other than the way their wishes and inclination would lead, because they think they ought to. In other words, such thoughts, involving words like 'ought' and 'right' and 'wrong', can function as an element in people's motivation. And some approaches to moral education see the development of this form of motivation as central. The same writer, for instance, goes on to speak of the need for (self-) discipline: 'doing what you do not want to do, and not doing what you would like to do' (*ibid.*).

When people use 'ought' with the sense that the 'ought' pulls against their inclination, it is not necessarily the case that they are consciously referring to a rule or principle. (I outlined in Chapter 8 a form of reasoning which could issue in an 'ought' without

referring to norms.) But often there will be an awareness of some rule or general principle which should be followed and which applies in the particular case - and for some people acting on principles may be central to their experience of morality(n). And there will sometimes be the sense - since the 'ought' pulls against inclination - that it takes an effort of will to act in accordance with the principle. Thus we have the notion that was seen as central to morality in the discussion document on *Spiritual and Moral Development* from the National Curriculum Council for England and Wales (NCC 1993, republished as SCAA 1995), which put at the head of its list of the qualities to be developed in moral education: 'The will to behave morally as a point of principle.'

Varieties of ethical motivation

This is a way, then, in which motivation can function in morality(n). Is it, however, desirable that it function in such a way? There is a strong strand in recent moral philosophy and philosophical writing about moral education which plays down the value of such motivation and might like to exclude it altogether. Anscombe (1997) examined and found wanting the 'ought' which she saw as central to modern moral philosophy; Williams (1985) put a deconstruction of the notion of obligation at the centre of his critique of 'the morality system' in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*; and taking up this theme of moral obligation John White (1990, p. 53) writes:

'Children are brought up to believe that ineluctable duties are laid on them to do or refrain from this or that..... They also learn, as part of this same scheme of thought, to feel guilt and remorse when they fail to live up to their obligations. They come to blame themselves and their shortcomings. And not only themselves. They are trained to see other people, too, through the same reductive spectacles, as abiders by, or deviants from, their moral duties.'

White goes on to comment that 'our ethical life does not *have* to be as unlovely as this'. If we accept that an ethical life centred on and dominated by a sense of moral obligation is unlovely, we need to look for alternatives. And much recent moral philosophy has, of course, been exploring alternatives. There are the neo-

Aristotelians, the Humeans, the proponents of an ethic of care. There is a variety of positions here, but they tend to converge on one or other, or both, of two points. First, they move away from such general (one could almost say 'all-purpose') motivations as a sense of obligation to more particular motivations, such as are incorporated into the various virtues (where each of honesty, courage, fidelity and so on has a motivation specific to it; cf. Jackson 1978; McDowell 1997). Second, they see moral behaviour as motivated by desire or affects in one way or another, so that rather than there having to be a 'battleground' of obligation and desire, the important question is the nature of the person's desires and affects. Thus an ethic of care finds the underlying motivation of the ethically responsible person in *caring*, which is an essentially affective matter. Again, when White suggests that for moral education we should substitute an education in altruism, he is speaking of something which has to be manifested in people's feelings. At a minimum, the altruistic person will sometimes be motivated by compassion, whereas we can imagine a rigid moralist, adhering to general principles, and capable of the will to follow them, never actually *feeling* compassion.[4]

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[4] To some degree, a broadly Humean tendency is manifested in the recent turn in moral philosophy towards 'virtue ethics', though the writers within this tendency more often take their cue from Aristotle than from Hume (Annette Baier is one exception). Advocates of virtue ethics often see themselves as presenting an Aristotelian account in contrast to a Kantian one. The point needs to be mentioned here, because while I shall in what follows be suggesting that an aspect of the Kantian approach needs to be retained, I would not want to be read as defending Kant against Aristotle; it does not appear that there is necessarily a large contrast between Kant and Aristotle on this matter of motivation.

An Aristotelian ethic does not suppose, as some modern accounts seem to, that people ideally would act mainly out of fellow-feeling (in fact a distinctly altruistic motivation does not figure largely in Aristotle) and it does have to do with the basic structure of an agent's desires rather than with adventitious feeling. The NCC document's 'will to act morally as a point of principle' may not be alien to Aristotle's ethics, even though the modern phrase could not be translated exactly into Aristotle's vocabulary. Certainly Aristotle believed that the possession of the virtues involved acting according to the right rule or principle (cf. Ch. 6 above), and he has the conception of doing what is noble for its own sake. One can imagine that if Aristotle and Kant could converse now, they might agree on a good deal, including some notion of 'how the upright gentleman behaves' (where the gender reference is deliberate).

In the face of so much counterargument, is there any point in trying to hang on to the notion of a sense of moral obligation as a motivation? In the next section I shall reinforce the point already made, that it is not sufficient to rely on other forms of motivation even if they do seem more attractive.

The case for a specifically moral motivation

To a moral philosopher, the kind of motivation we are now talking about comes, so to speak, with the label 'Kantian' attached. This can be misleading, both because we do not have to accept all of Kant's ethics in order to recognise a role for a sense of moral obligation, and because it is possible to defend its role on other than Kantian grounds.

On the former point, it is in the first chapter of the *Groundwork*, where he is still analysing what he calls 'common rational knowledge of morality', that Kant gives his initial account of the motive of moral duty, well before he introduces the notion of the categorical imperative, let alone the notoriously difficult conception of the noumenal and phenomenal standpoints. To Kant himself, then, the experience of this kind of motivation is recognisable prior to the rest of his own theory; in this sense, there need be nothing specifically Kantian about it. It is striking that when Mill writes in Chapter 3 of *Utilitarianism* about the sanction of morality - for which he uses the word 'conscience', and which he describes as an inner feeling - he seems, if one can put on his words the phenomenological interpretation which they seem to demand, to be talking about something which, in experience, would be very like the sense of reverence for the moral law which Kant talks about. The sense that one *ought* to act in a certain way, even though it is against one's immediate inclinations, is certainly present in Mill (and in many utilitiarians, as Williams (1985 p. 184) recognises).

On the latter point, it is possible, with Mill, to defend the salience of a sense of moral obligation on consequentialist grounds, that is, by showing that things are likely to go better on the whole if people are capable of acting out of a sense of obligation. Kant

himself points out that someone who is so absorbed in his own troubles that he feels no inclination to help others, may nevertheless do so out of a sense of duty. The picture of someone who takes account of the interests of others *only* out of a sense of duty is not an attractive one. But our question here is, is it desirable that this sort of motivation is available as one among the possible kinds of motivation that can move people to take account of the interests of others?

In earlier writing (*TAV*, p. 78; Haydon 1999b) I have used the example of the Milgram (1974) experiments on obedience: many of the subjects in these experiments, believing that they were inflicting severe electric shocks on other people, went on doing so on the instructions of the experimenter. I suggested - not that people who defied the experimenter's instruction couldn't have had a variety of motivations for doing so - but that it is important that there is the possibility of people saying 'No. This is immoral, I will not do it.' (Some people, but not many, did respond in that sort of way.) It is possible that there are cases in which someone defies the experimenter, not out of benevolence or altruism, but simply because he or she thinks that what she is being asked to do is morally wrong. The mere possibility that this kind of motivation might operate in the service of morality(n) in cases where no other motivations would is, I suggest, enough to show that this kind of motivation is worth maintaining. In other words, it is important that there be the possibility that a thought such as 'I ought not to do this', 'It would be wrong to do this', or even, 'This is against the (moral) rules', can function for an individual as a reason, and sometimes a sufficient motivating reason, for doing the action.

Language and psychology

If there is to be that possibility, it has to be a possibility within the public discourse of morality. It is not only that people must sometimes say to themselves, privately, things like 'I am not going to do this because it would be wrong'. For if such things were only ever said privately by people to themselves, new speakers could never learn to say such things. That is the importance of the

language in which such thoughts are expressed being part of public discourse.

In earlier writings (*T A V* Ch. 8, and 1999b) I have put some weight on the idea that the very meaning of words like 'ought' in such contexts might be mysterious. I was perhaps unconsciously working - though I should have known better - with a picture theory of meaning by which there has to be something in the world for a word to correspond to if it is to have meaning. Then one would be puzzled by the meaning of 'ought', and related words, because there seems to be nothing in the world to which an 'ought' corresponds. On a more Wittgensteinian view of meaning it need be no surprise that the practice, in discourse, of using terms such as 'ought' and 'right' and 'wrong' can exist, and have effect, even though the participants in the practice may be quite unable to give an abstract account of the meaning of the words.

We do not, then, have to follow Anscombe's advice from 1958 that

'the concepts of obligation, and duty - *moral* obligation and *moral* duty, that is to say - and of what is *morally* right and wrong, and of the *moral* sense of 'ought', ought to be jettisoned if this is psychologically possible; because they are survivals, or derivatives from survivals, from an earlier conception of ethics which no longer generally survives.....' (Anscombe 1997, p. 26).

Even if they are survivals from a publicly defunct conception of ethics - which is a conception of morality as law where the law-giver is God - this does not mean that these terms cannot be put to service in the cause of a different conception, such as that of morality(n) understood in secular terms. Forms of discourse which are incorporated into social practices are quite capable of surviving changes in the interpretation of terminology (this has happened for many people with religious language).

Arguably all we need to say about the meaning of terms such as 'ought' is what Griffin (1996 p. 83) says: 'To say "You ought not to do it" is.....to say that there is some norm or standard to which your not doing it would conform.' Within philosophy of education

Straughan (1982 Ch. 3; cf. 1989 Ch. 1) has a more thoroughly worked out account based on what is essentially the same idea.

An account of how the word 'ought' functions in relation to norms does not by itself constitute an account of motivation; for that it would need at least to be supplemented by an account of how it is that certain norms can be recognised as having authority over people's conduct (which will be the topic of the next chapter). But seeing 'ought' in Griffin's way may at least remove the sense (which non-philosophers may not share in any case) that there is something mysterious about the very meaning of 'ought'.

If the public discourse which uses terms such as 'ought' and 'wrong' can function without any articulated theory of the meaning of the terms, it can also function without any specific psychological understanding of what is going on when people's motivation involves the use of such terms (when people do something because they think they ought to, because the rules demand it, and so on). But four points are worth making in connection with psychological accounts:

1) Any plausible account is likely to include the idea that norms which have an existence in public discourse can be internalised. Such an account will not necessarily use the *word* 'internalised' but it will have to give an account of how norms which exist in public space before a particular individual exists at all, can come to operate in some sense inside that individual. Mill, for one, offers such an account in Chapter 3 of *Utilitarianism*, before Freud came on the scene. I am not competent to say whether the most plausible account will turn out to be a psychoanalytic one, but there are certainly a number of writers on morality and moral education, not themselves psychoanalysts, who have taken such accounts seriously, including Peters and, more recently, Scheffler (1992 Ch. 5), and Rustin in *TRAW*.

2) It is not, so far as I can see, necessary for such an account to put great weight on guilt - which, as I have noted, is one of the things that worries White and many others. If it were true that

morality(n) could not function without people constantly being racked with guilt, this would suggest that morality(n) was defeating its own object of ameliorating the human condition. But first, while guilt may come into certain psychological accounts of moral motivation, the thought which moves the individual need not be 'I shall not do this because I shall feel guilty if I do (and feeling guilty will be an unpleasant experience which I would rather avoid)'. The conscious thought may contain no reference to guilt but may merely be 'I shall not do this because it would be wrong'. At the level of public discourse, it is a necessary condition of such motivation that the conceptual possibilities for it are available; whether the possibility of feeling guilt is or is not a necessary condition is a separate question.

Secondly, the negative features of guilt should not be exaggerated. Consider this example from Hare (written at a time when Czechoslovakia still existed, and doing philosophy there was a subversive activity):

'I recently visited Prague to talk to some philosophers there. If, when I was crossing into Czechoslovakia, the officials had asked me the purpose of my visit, I should certainly have told them a lie, because if they had known they would most probably have expelled me..... And, just as certainly, I should have felt, not merely fear of being found out and getting into trouble, but a feeling of *guilt* at telling the lie (although I should have been in no doubt that I ought to tell it).' (1981 p. 31)

If Hare had told the lie he would not have been *racked* with guilt; and his disposition to feel guilt in such circumstances (which he sees as a morally positive disposition) has not destroyed his quality of life (if it had I think we would have heard of this in his later writings). I do not think this is only because he is a philosopher. We should not think that any conception of morality which has a place for guilt is one that must be rejected by civilised benevolent people.

3) The same applies for conceptions which have a place for shame as a motivation, where shame differs from guilt (cf. Taylor, G. 1985) in having more direct reference to the perception or opinion

of others. In the last chapter I argued that a publicly shared understanding of morality will include a place for criticism, and for consideration, both individual and shared, of whether a criticised or potentially criticisable action can be justified. Shame seems to be the affective side of the disposition to consider whether one's actions can be or could be justified to others. It is not surprising that with increasing attention among moral philosophers to the social aspects of morality there have been recent acknowledgements of the role of shame.[5]

4) The public discourse which uses this idea of motivation presupposes that people *can* act in a particular way because they think that they ought to. That is not necessarily to say that it presupposes *freedom of the will*, with all the connotations that that term has had for some philosophers, but it is to say that the public discourse of morality will not too easily accept excuses of the form 'I couldn't help it, because.....'. Of course, this public discourse can acknowledge that there are cases where people really could not have acted in a certain way, even if they did think they ought to: it may really be that some provocations, temptations, or whatever, are too great. But if it were really thought that no one was ever able to choose to act in a certain way because they thought they ought to, there would be no role for such locutions in the discourse.

Since the thinking of individuals is never isolated from public discourse, the extent to which people think they can or cannot help what they are doing is itself in part a function of the nature of the public discourse. It is not unusual to hear on television talk shows[6] remarks such as 'I've been unfaithful to my partner ten times; I can't help it; it's my nature' (from someone who acknowledges in some sense that his or her unfaithfulness is a violation of shared norms). And given the apparently self-

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5 See, e.g., Williams (1993), Tombs (1995), and research currently being pursued at the Institute of Education by Brenda Finney on the practice within the juvenile justice system of 'reintegrative shaming'.

6 I don't often listen to them, and I have heard this sort of thing several times. For some remarks on the way American talk shows focus on the victim, thus diverting attention from the blameworthiness of the perpetrator, see Lamb (1996) pp. 123-7.

justifying nature of anger and the attacks it can lead to, as pointed out in Chapter 6, claims that violence was an inevitable response to provocation are part of a similar discourse. My point here is not that such an account of an individual's behaviour cannot be correct; it may be in certain cases. It is that if such thoughts become increasingly frequent within public discourse it will become increasingly likely that people do think they are unable to help what they are doing or should not be criticised for it, and so on. It is not just that people will avail themselves of whatever resources in public discourse serve their purposes. It is that the contents of our consciousness are formed at least in part by what is available in public discourse. If thoughts such as 'you could resist however great the temptation' are not available in public discourse, they may not be available to an individual; and it could be that very fact which makes the difference between the individual's being able, and being unable, to resist.

Recall the point cited in Chapter 6 from Larry May: that 'morality should not be diminished when the going gets tough.' We could bring out May's point by reading 'morality should not be *seen to be* diminished when the going gets tough'. The point is about how morality must be publicly perceived, if it is to fulfil its function. It must not be seen as too easy to escape from in the face of pressures; though it is at the same time true that it will lose credibility if it is seen never to make allowances.[7]

Schooling and moral language

As educators, fortunately, we do not have to be passive in the face of changes in public discourse; to some degree we can influence it. (I am trying, in a small way, to influence it through some of my publications.) The overarching educational conclusion from the argument of this chapter is that children have to be exposed to the terminology of moral evaluation, and that it matters what kind of terminology of moral evaluation they are exposed to. It is not part of my argument that they should *only* be exposed to a thin vocabulary of 'right' and 'wrong', 'ought' and 'ought not'. There is the whole rich vocabulary of 'thick' ethical concepts to which

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7 Cf. Scheffler's (1992) discussion of the stringency of morality.

virtue theorists have drawn attention. But I do maintain that a certain sort of motivation would not be available to persons who had not learned to use terms such as 'right' and 'wrong' and 'ought' and 'ought not'

Should one take it for granted that schooling will get people into the way of using such terms? I think one should not. This is not to deny that schools are, by and large, very moral places, as Nick Tate said in his January 1996 speech (at the conference mentioned in Appendix 2). But it is to express a degree of scepticism about how far one can assume in schools any systematic and consistent use of moral language. It is not unusual to come across teachers who would be reluctant to use the terms 'right' and 'wrong' out of fear that they would be thought, or conviction that they must not be, 'judgemental' or 'moralistic' (cf. the quotation from Midgley in the previous chapter).

If one cannot assume a consistent use of moral terminology among teachers then it also cannot be assumed among the general public who include the parents of children coming into the schools. Possibly in a more homogeneous (and perhaps literally God-fearing) society it might once have been possible to assume that whatever initiation into moral discourse was needed could be left to home upbringing. But in our present situation few assumptions can be made about the current understandings of morality and moral language other than that there is a fair degree of subjectivism, scepticism, and sheer confusion around.

Schools, then, have a responsibility for the maintenance of a certain sort of public discourse. This means that the willingness or otherwise of teachers to use a certain sort of vocabulary is important. Perhaps some anecdotal evidence will be admissible here. At a meeting of the Values Education Council in May 1998, where most of the participants were or had been teachers and most were professionally involved in moral education, I raised the question whether (in view of the scepticism and confusion which I have just mentioned) the terms 'right' and 'wrong' (in a moral sense) would be better abandoned. I find it significant that

participants took the question seriously enough to make it a focus for further discussion.

In that discussion there was some consideration of alternative terminology which people might use if they wished to convey that some conduct goes against accepted norms. One term which appears to be growing in popularity is 'unacceptable': often used, it seems, to mark the difference between what is (to be) tolerated and what is not (to be) tolerated. In some ways the term 'unacceptable' may seem to carry its meaning on its face more clearly than does 'wrong'; the reference to recognised norms, while still implicit, may be easily understood. An educationalist and teacher of long experience said that she would tell the pupil who was disrupting a lesson by banging on the desk that his behaviour was unacceptable, but not that it was wrong.[8] No doubt part of the point was a concern not to condemn, or appear to be condemning, the child as opposed to criticising the behaviour (a distinction which it is vital if the kind of criticism I referred to in the last chapter is not to be counterproductive). But I think there was also the idea that to call such behaviour wrong would be to make too grand a claim, as if it purported to refer to a universal or absolute norm; banging on a desk, after all, is not wrong *per se*. The term 'unacceptable', understood as something like 'ruled out by the norms which the teacher has decided to apply in this classroom' makes a more modest claim.

Later in the same discussion participants were wondering what they would say about rape. I think there was a shared sense of the incongruity of using the term 'unacceptable' both for desk-banging and for rape. If 'unacceptable' becomes an everyday term of criticism, something stronger will be needed for other occasions. Perhaps (of the terms available within a relatively thin vocabulary) 'wrong' is the sort of word to do the job.[9]

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8 Acknowledgements to Janet Edwards.

9 President Clinton, in his television statement on 17 August 1998 following his evidence to a Grand Jury on the Monica Lewinsky affair, admitted that his relationship with Lewinsky had been 'inappropriate - in fact, wrong'. This shows the usage of 'inappropriate' as another word which, like 'unacceptable', indicates that something is ruled out by certain norms - in this case the norms pertaining to public office. It

My own argument, at any rate, is that morality(n) needs the availability of terms such as 'wrong' (though 'ought' and 'ought not' may be even more central); and not just their availability, but their being taken seriously. This certainly means that they should not be overused. They need to be used with reference to norms which are seen as important, not purely local or temporary, and subject to wide consensus.

It has not been the argument of this chapter that people are necessarily motivated to do what they think they ought to do. It is possible to see what one ought to do by reference to certain norms or standards, while not taking those norms seriously at all. And there may be nothing wrong with this - if the norms, say, are those of a particular game which one has no interest in playing. What we need to do now is consider what is involved in people taking certain norms, those of morality(n), to have authority.

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also shows Clinton's awareness that 'wrong' is a stronger term of condemnation of the behaviour. Later he moved to a term which is presumably even stronger in American public discourse, though it would not be part of a secular morality(n): 'I have sinned'.

Chapter Eleven
Moral authority

A crisis of moral authority?

Many observers are worried by what they see as the questioning of moral authority in the modern world. A not untypical example occurred in Melanie Phillips' (1996) polemic on educational standards, *All Must Have Prizes.* It is particularly pertinent here because she was commenting on something I had written in 1993.[1] Her somewhat selective quotation from my article is as follows:

'It still must be said forcefully that accepting uncritically what someone tells you because they are seen to be in authority is not a good thing.....
Doing what is right cannot be a matter of doing what one is told. Schools must produce people who are able to think for themselves what is right....
It will not take an exceptionally clever pupil, or an exceptionally bolshie one, to ask 'How do we know this is right or that is wrong?' Any pupil who is being taught to think ought to be asking such questions. And the same pupil ought to see that 'Because I say so' is not an acceptable answer. Nor is 'Because these are the values of your society.' When exposed to a little more teaching of history, perhaps, this pupil will see that by such an argument the values of slave states and Nazi states would have to be endorsed.'

Phillips' comment is:

'But this reasoning was specious and dangerous. Of course pupils should be taught to think for themselves and should understand the reasoning behind the moral rules they are taught. But the answer to the pupil's question was surely: 'Because these are the values of our common humanity and are the basis of human flourishing.' Not to answer it in that way leaves it up to the pupil to decide that sometimes the end may justify the means, for example; or that stealing may be permissible if you are poor; or that lying to Parliament is justified to protect the sale of arms. Far from preventing us against succumbing to totalitarian regimes, it provides the means to endorse them. Quite contrary to Haydon's own example, it might legitimise Nazism because it would say in effect that the Nazi view of the world was merely what the Nazi

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1 In *TES* 19 March. (Phillips' reference is incorrect.)

thought was right and was therefore as valid as the pupil's own view. If there is no absolute right, it follows that there can be no absolute wrong, just as if there is no absolute truth there can be no lies. If rightness is simply what is right-for-me, then who is to say that Nazism was an absolute wrong? But of course it was just that, because it offended the common moral code of humanity. Haydon's attitude, however, opened the way for his pupils to say that racial prejudice was no less right than tolerance; or that it was permissible to kill people because they were genetically imperfect. Moral relativism leads directly to despotism and tyranny. It was no accident that Nietzsche, in whose long shadow our relativist society was formed, represented a significant milestone on the road to the Final Solution.' (pp. 221-2)

In his contribution to *TRAW*, Paul Standish comments on Phillips' attribution to me of moral relativism on the basis of the passage quoted:

'Now this is a bit odd given that Haydon's point of view derives very much from the tradition of liberal education (with the questioning Socrates in the background) which in other respects Phillips seems eager to embrace. Is this the relativism that must be so roundly condemned? ..... Haydon's purpose is hardly to endorse the idea that we cannot know what is right and wrong. It is to favour reason-giving over blind acceptance of authority.' (*TRAW* p. 49)

Standish is exactly right about my purpose in the 1993 article. One could leave the matter there, except that Phillips' reaction is an example of the current state of the public understanding of morality, and anyone concerned with the improvement of that understanding needs to give some regard to writings which may typify current confusions, and which may themselves have some influence on the views of a wider public.

These are some of the things Phillips is doing in her comments:-

1) She is accepting that reasons can be given for something being right or wrong. I have no problem with this.

2) She is offering her own account of the fundamental kind of reason for something being right or wrong. The reasons she sees

as fundamental are of a broadly naturalist or neo-Aristotelian kind, and are broadly in line with what I have said here about the function of morality(n).

3) She is suggesting that pupils should be given the correct reason for the norms they are expected to follow. Perhaps what matters here is the interpretation of 'give'.[2] If a teacher simply tells pupils a reason this may have little or no effect on their thinking. A reason which they come to through their own thinking may be one they take more seriously. In fact I do not think the relevant teaching need be or should be either purely didactic or purely a matter of 'discovery learning' on the pupil's part. In the passage immediately following that quoted by Phillips (but ignored by her) I referred to the rich resources within moral philosophy for answering the pupils' questions about how we know what is right and wrong. Such resources can be used both to structure discussion and to give content to it; answers which emerge from philosophical discussion are neither impositions by the teacher nor the pupils' unguided thoughts.[3]

4) Phillips displays - as, I think, do many popular commentators on moral education - a scepticism about the abilities of ordinary people to 'see reason' in moral matters. Her concession - as it seems - that 'pupils should be taught to think for themselves' is immediately followed by the assertion that they should understand 'the reasoning' (not apparently their own reasoning) behind the moral rules they are taught, and then that they should be given the correct reason. As Standish also sees, one encounters - not only in Phillips - a curious brand of anti-intellectualism or anti-rationalism when the topic is one of right and wrong. People who are concerned about educational standards will usually believe that there are appropriate ways of thinking in particular areas of the curriculum, so that when pupils are thinking about a

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2 One might think that the word 'give', in a educational context, is hardly one that needs any special philosophical attention. But see the chapter 'Giving Someone a Lesson' in Blake, Smeyers, Smith and Standish (1998).

3 I have argued for the importance of philosophy in moral education in Haydon (1993a) and briefly in *TAV* pp. 151-2.

problem in, say, maths or physics, it does not follow, just from the fact that they are doing their own thinking, that there is no limit to what they can reasonably come up with. Yet where questions of right and wrong are concerned, these same people seem to believe that if pupils think for themselves they might come up with anything at all - at which point we begin to get invocations of Nietzsche, relativism, and various other bogies, including Nazism. This actually suggests that these critics themselves subscribe to a kind of irrationalism about morality, believing that morality does not rest on any rational basis, and therefore that there is no such thing as a right way of thinking about moral matters. If they believed there were a rational basis for morality, why would they be so worried that other people, doing their own thinking, would come to the kind of answers which they (the critics) think are wrong? If they believe there are right answers in morality, why should they be so sceptical about ordinary people's capacity to see what these answers are?

5) Phillips does not separate the question of how we know what is right and wrong from the question of whether other people have the authority to tell us what to do. But it has to be said that I also did not make that distinction in the article from which she quotes. Certainly I was expressing a scepticism as to whether the authority of society should be accepted. Since in my present argument I am giving a large role to the social recognition of norms, it may look as if I am contradicting myself. Here then may be the crux, both of what is at issue between Phillips and myself, and of whether my present argument hangs together.

Kinds of authority

In the last chapter I argued that morality(n) cannot dispense with the kind of motivation involved when people act in a certain way because they think they ought to. In this way, morality(n) has to be what some have called an imperative or prescriptive conception of morality. The relevant contrast here is with conceptions, perhaps Aristotelian or neo-Aristotelian, in which the motivating force of morality is attractive rather than imperative.[4]

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4 For this distinction see e.g. Larmore (1996).

If the attractions of a moral life, intimately connected with the good life, were sufficient, or could be made sufficient, we would not need to raise questions about the authority of morality. For my part I do indeed find such an 'attractive' conception of morality attractive; but it is not a conception of morality(n). Assuming that morality(n) is primarily a morality of norms, it cannot be considered an optional matter whether individual agents follow the norms of morality(n) or not. There have to be social expectations that the norms are to be followed, and that the attitude of individuals towards the norms will not be that which individuals might quite properly take towards the rules of games which they choose not to play. This is to say again that the norms of morality(n), like the norms of law, have to be recognised as having some kind of authority.

From a pragmatic and educational point of view, it is worth noting that popular conceptions of morality at present probably do see it largely in imperative terms. While it is not inconceivable that public education about morality might involve an attempt to subvert such understandings, it is an advantage to be able to work from where people are in their present conceptions, or at least to be able to take them seriously rather than dismissing them. The thought, widespread in public conceptions, that young people should be taught certain norms which they will take to have authority over their actions, will not just dissolve in the face of positive accounts of virtues or of caring.

One might wonder at this point whether it is essential that all those who see themselves as subject to the authority of the norms of morality(n) must have the same conception of that authority. The SCAA Forum acknowledged in the Preamble to its Statement of Values that agreement on the values is compatible with disagreement on their sources. One might read this as applying something like Rawls' (1993) notion of overlapping consensus to the authority of moral norms: people can have different ideas about the nature of that authority, so long as they all think the norms have some kind of authority.

Possibly no specific understanding of the nature of moral authority has to be written into the conception of morality(n) as such. It seems likely, though, that a shared morality in which there were no shared sense of the authority of that morality would risk coming apart. Different sources of authority would be unlikely to coincide completely in the norms they underpin; acknowledgement of different sources of authority by different people might tend to pull attention away from the consensus on norms that are shared, towards those that are not. It is a fact, certainly, that different sources of moral authority will be acknowledged in a plural society; the point is to see whether, compatibly with this, there can be acknowledgement of one shared source of authority attaching to morality(n). (There does not, after all, seem to be any inconsistency in one person acknowledging more than one source of authority - say, the law of the land and God - for the norms against murder.)[5]

Is there a candidate as a source of authority which can be acknowledged by all in a plural society? I take it that the authority cannot in a plural society be divine; also that a Kantian universalist understanding in which the authority of moral norms is the authority of Reason is too problematic - even among philosophers - for it to provide a source of authority which can be publicly acknowledged. What of the idea that the authority of morality over the individual is the authority of Society?

In the literature of philosophy of education a distinction between two kinds or senses of authority has often been made (e.g. Peters 1959, 1966; K. Baier 1973). There is the authority of the expert who has knowledge which others (lay persons in relation to that authority) do not have; and the authority, often conferred on

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[5] The Preamble to the SCAA Forum Statement of Values also says that 'the only authority claimed for these values .... is the authority of consensus'. If the consensus itself is seen as a source of authority people will have a reason (a publicly sanctioned one) for going along with the consensus even when they also acknowledge a different source of authority which pulls in a different direction. This can admittedly put individuals, and possibly whole communities, in a difficult position; but this is a difficulty which already exists; it may be clarified, but is not created, by conceiving of morality(n) and its authority is the way suggested here.

particular persons under publicly recognised norms, to tell certain others what to do. Thus the teacher may claim (relative to her pupils) an authority on a certain area of curriculum content; and she may claim the authority to tell her students what to learn and in various ways how to behave. The first claim may be used as a premise in an argument to support a claim to the second kind of authority, but they are two different claims.

In terms of this distinction, what kind of authority, on moral matters, could society have in relation to the individual? It will not be the authority of knowledge of what is right and wrong. If we were to say that society 'knows' what is right and wrong, we would presumably have to unpack this in terms of a social consensus being the criterion of right and wrong. There is one kind of case, conceivable rather than actual, where consensus can be taken as the criterion of what is right. This is the kind of case envisaged hypothetically in Habermas's (e.g. 1990) communicative ethics, where all those affected by a given norm are able to discuss and raise objections to that norm, under conditions of unconstrained communication (as defined by Habermas's ideal speech situation). If all those who would be affected by a given norm would - because of conditions of full information and so on - see any objection which there might be to that norm from their point of view, and none of them in fact do see any objection, then *ex hypothese* we can say that there *is* no objection to that norm; then the consensus is the criterion of the norm's being justified.[6]

This possibility affords an answer to some of the worries which people often have about the idea of a morality based in consensus. It will often be objected that consensus does not make something

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6 It is doubtful whether this argument can apply to any norms which are not concerned with, and seen by those affected to be concerned with, the protection or promotion of interests (cf.*TAV* p. 144). Some norms - including some which are seen by their adherents as deriving from divine authority - are not seen by their adherents as being about human interests at all. One response to this would be that it should not be a problem where morality(n) is in question; but see Ch. 12 below. Another response would be to argue, with Khin Zaw (1996 pp. 152-153), that wherever there is a conflict of moral beliefs, the beliefs can be treated as moral interests. If she is right, it may be possible to bring even beliefs which are not about human interests in the normal sense into a Habermas-like schema.

right, and examples like that of Nazi Germany will be cited: if consensus makes something right, then Nazi policy was right because there was a consensus on it in Germany in the 1930s. The reply is that this was not a consensus in the relevant sense: namely a consensus of all those who would be affected by the norms in question. There were whole sectors of the society, very much affected by the norms in question, which were not part of the consensus.

The conditions written into Habermas's test for the justification of norms are empirically unlikely to be realised as regards norms applying to a whole society (let alone even more widely). It is not possible for all those who will be affected by a given social norm to participate directly in discussion on it (even if we confine our attention to *humans* who will be affected by it[7]); and for those who are involved in discussion, it is unlikely that the discussion will be free of all bias and pressure such that, in Habermas's terms, the only force is the force of the better argument.

In ordinary conditions, the fact that there is a broad consensus across a society on certain norms does not establish - or should not be taken to establish - that these norms are right or beyond criticism[8]. My alternative formulations here are intended to take account of the possibilities of a range of realist or non-realist interpretations, so that it will not be necessary here to go into metaethics. If a realist account is wanted by which certain norms are correct, I am saying both that being norms on which there is a social consensus is not what it is for norms to be correct, and that a social consensus on norms is not infallibly correlated with their being correct. If we take a non-realist route, then of course social consensus is not a criterion of actually-held norms being the 'real' ones, because there is nothing which is a criterion of actually-held norms being the 'real' ones; but this need not worry us if we can recognise the possibility of actual norms being criticised and

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7 I consider how norms may relate to non-human animals in Chapter 12.

8 Critics of the SCAA Forum who say that empirical findings can not establish the correctness of norms are right; cf. *TRAW* p. 142. Whether such claims were actually made on behalf of the Forum is a different question.

changed in ways which will be seen as improvement. The objection to taking consensus as authoritative in the sense of establishing correctness will now be that to take it this way would be to insulate the norms against criticism. For morality(n) it is important that the possibility of criticism and change be retained, both because the actual norms recognised by a society at a given time may not be the ones that best serve the purposes of morality(n), and because even if they are the ones that best serve it at a given time, circumstances may change. I shall say more about the possible bases of criticism in the next chapter.

So, society is not the measure of right and wrong. We now need to consider the possibility that society nevertheless has authority in the second of the senses distinguished, namely the authority to tell people how to behave. We could unpack this in terms of the publicly recognised norms of a society being authoritative for the conduct of individuals - at least provisionally. By saying 'at least provisionally' we can recognise that the norms are subject to criticism and improvement, and still hold that - unless and until they are changed - people ought to abide by them.

The analogy with law again

It will perhaps be clear that we have returned to the analogy between morality(n) and law. The sort of authority we are now talking about is the kind of authority that can be attributed to the law. In broadly liberal-democratic societies, people do not generally think that there is some model of ideal law to which the actual law either does or does not correspond (or if they do think in this way, arguably this shows a certain deficiency in citizenship education); people can think that the law has authority over their conduct - that they ought by and large to obey the law - while acknowledging that it is subject to criticism and change.

It is worth pursuing the analogy again, to see something further of the conditions on which law can have acknowledged authority, and whether these conditions do or can apply to the moral norms of society.

The law can appear to the people who are subject to it to be an alien force - something imposed from the outside. Morality can appear this way also. To people who are in any case in a position of a certain subordination to others - which to some degree applies to all school pupils - it may appear that the norms which others expect them to adhere to are nothing but disguised ways of saying 'we don't want you to do this'; or even 'don't do this, or else'.

And when it appears that there are no particular sanctions which follow violation of these norms - unlike legal ones - morality may appear to be not so much an alien force, as an alien presence which lacks any force. This is just the sort of condition which can contribute to a widespread scepticism about morality, to lip service at best, or to an alienated 'so what?' attitude towards moral norms. And this is the sort of way in which morality comes to have a bad name (Hare 1992; cf. Midgley 1991; and the passage from Standish in *TRAW*, p. 50, quoted in Chapter 1 above).

The democratic tradition in politics over several centuries has - with varying success - worked against the sense of law as an alien power. In a democratic system it is possible - though in the absence of an effective education for citizenship it will often not happen - for people to see themselves as subject, not to alien demands, but to a system which they themselves are part of. This is, I suggest, the sort of conception which moral education also needs to be aiming at, where people see themselves as on the inside of morality. If I am right that a language of norms allows more readily than a language of virtues for the public articulation of shared standards, there is a further reason here for giving priority to a language of norms. As Annette Baier (1997, p. 273) puts it, 'significant power is possessed by those shaping our conception of the virtues and expecting us to display them, approving when we do, disapproving and perhaps shunning us when we do not'. Baier thinks this power is less coercive than the power exercised by those setting up an ethics of norms one is obliged to follow. But it seems to me it could be the other way round; if the formulation and promulgation of norms is a public,

transparent process, there will be less danger of manipulation in it then in the attempt to bring people up as certain sorts of people (cf. *TAV* pp. 124 - 6, and my references to Patricia White in Chapter 5 above).[9]

What is involved in seeing oneself as on the inside of morality? One point is that one can see reason for the norms of morality (as one can see point in the law). This does not in itself mean that one will endorse those norms, but it is perhaps a precondition of that. This suggests that education needs to educate people about morality. Far from representing it as something mysterious (or ignoring it as too problematic) education needs to focus attention on the nature of morality(n).[10]

A second point, already made in Chapter 5, is that people are able to agree to norms, not just in the sense of agreeing that there is reason for them, but in the stronger sense of agreeing to adhere to them (I suggested in Chapter 5 that this is more practicable where morality is expressed in terms of norms than where it is expressed in terms of virtues). There is a partial model in the way that people, joining a particular club or association, will often not just acknowledge that its rules exist, or even just acknowledge that its rules have a point, but will agree to abide by its rules. For the law, an analogous position is possible though not often realised; one could imagine that people, perhaps on reaching the age of majority, undertake as citizens to adhere to the law (the closest to this that happens in practice may be when adult immigrants are granted citizenship of their new state). For morality, we can hardly imagine anything like a ceremony; but we can see it as a possible attitude that people can have towards the

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9 If one is worried about power relations within society, one may have some reason to be suspicious of the adage that morality is 'caught not taught'. At least the power relationship is more evident when something is taught rather than caught.

10 In doing this I take it that the ideas teachers will be drawing on will not only be from philosophy, since a variety of empirical disciplines will be relevant. It is important that education should not present morality(n) as the only way of seeing morality; therefore, as part of their response to diversity, teachers need to recognise that, in an informal sense of the terms, morality means different things to different people.

norms of their society, that they have undertaken to live by those norms - though not, as we shall see, in an uncritical spirit.

A third point, which can also use the analogy of joining a club, is that one may take the norms the more seriously to the extent that one does see oneself as belonging to and valuing the community whose norms they are. This is one reason why one of the most important tasks for education where morality is concerned is to try to overcome the alienation that many people may feel from their community (one of the respects in which it is important for liberals to learn from communitarianism). I do not have in mind here only the sort of notional sense of membership in a community which could go with, for instance, acknowledging oneself as a member of Kant's kingdom of ends (though for some people this might work; cf. Haydon 1999b). I mean that a society which wants people to take morality seriously has to tackle in all sorts of way - which will often be more directly describable as political and economic - the danger of people feeling left out of their society.

This, coupled with the previous point, constitutes an acknowledgement of something that may seem to have been left behind in this discussion of the public face of morality - namely the affective aspects. Partly it is that the affective aspects of morality often attach to something other than morality(n); but even where morality(n) is concerned, a person can *care* about norms and care about adhering to them, if they are the norms of a community which he or she is part of and values. Then both the consciousness of the fact that these are shared norms (where the fact that a society has shared norms may itself be valued), and the consciousness of having played some part in the forming of a shared sense of norms, can be positive factors in motivating persons to take such norms more seriously, in the sense of seeing them as having authority over their own conduct.

A fourth point is that people can see themselves as sharing with others a responsibility for the norms of morality(n) to the extent that they can participate in criticism and change of those norms.

Again the analogy is clear with the way in which democracy hopes that people will see themselves as part of the system because they are able to criticise and make changes within the system.

If moral education can work with this sort of analogy, it will in effect be saying to young people:

'This is the prevailing morality of your society, on which people by-and-large do agree, even though they may have come to this consensus from different starting-points. Other people are not, on the whole, stupid, and the experience of society over generations is not irrelevant; though at the same time your study of history will show you that some moral ideas which hardly anyone would now accept were in their time surprisingly resilient, and would not have changed if they had not been criticised. So, given that you have the possibility of criticising the prevailing morality, and given that it can change as a result of criticism, it is reasonable for society to expect you, for the moment, to go along with it. Your criticism will have more weight to the extent that it based on an understanding of the reasons behind the prevailing morality, on your own experience of life, and on your reflective understanding of your experience and that of others. These kinds of understanding and experience are ones which we hope your education will help you to develop.'

It is important to this position that it is possible not only for the prevailing morality to be criticised, but also for it to change as a result of that criticism. This introduces a disanalogy between morality(n) and law. The democratic conception of the law holds that people are at liberty to campaign to get the law changed, but should abide by it (unless in exceptional circumstances) until it is changed. In the case of law there is a definite procedure of legislation. This makes it possible to say that a given law is in force at a given time - even until a precise time on a precise date - and that thereafter it is not in force. This in turn makes it possible to say to people 'you should go along with this law while it is in force, but if you, in conjunction with others, succeed in getting it changed, then once it is changed you need take no further notice of it'. If there were such a thing as moral legislation, we could transfer this model to morality. But there is no moral legislation as such. Does this make the whole process by which

morality is criticised and changed too fluid for the democratic analogy to be applied?

We should not exaggerate the difference. Though laws can cease to apply or come into force at a given time, there is often lying behind such changes a more gradual process. Laws can come into disrepute, can cease to be enforced, can come to be ignored, before they are actually repealed. Legislation may be the 'outward and visible sign' of a change in popular thinking which has been going on for some time. Morality does not get changed by acts of legislation; nevertheless it does get changed. The sexual morality of Britain, for instance, is changing.[11] (It remains open to people to say from a universalist perspective, that sexual morality has not changed; it is just that people are behaving less morally. But a greater tendency for people to do, without thinking it wrong, what once was thought wrong; and a greater tendency, not just to tolerate conduct that once was condemned, but to think of it as not wrong at all, are precisely the kinds of change we are interested in). The important point here is that the morality of a society gets changed through processes which are intelligible and which it is possible for persons to participate in. That there is less deference to the views of certain social elites, and a wider dissemination of ideas and arguments, than there used to be, makes it easier to defend the idea that the prevailing morality has a provisional authority. For the processes by which morality changes are, increasingly, ones which are visible to all and available to all.

The more we can see the influences on the changes as being ones to which everyone has access, the more we have an analogy between the processes by which law is changed (in principle, in a democratic society) and the processes by which morality changes. And the more we can say that people, as they become full

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11 See Chapter 7 note 7 for my caution about the idea of 'sexual morality'. Some recent empirical evidence of change is presented in *Young People, Politics and Citizenship: A Disengaged Generation?* (Citizenship Foundation 1998), which is the report on a Colloquium held in December 1997. Unfortunately, this publication will not help to promote public understanding of morality(n), since changes in attitudes towards pre-marital sex are the *only* matters reported on under the heading 'Moral matters'.

members of the society, will have the opportunity to participate in such processes, the more we can say that, in the meantime, they should see the prevailing morality as having authority over them.

Chapter Twelve
Criticism of norms and the scope of morality(n)

It is essential to the understanding of the authority of morality(n) for which I argued in the last chapter that the content of morality(n) is subject to criticism and may change as a result. I have said little so far about what form such criticism may take. In attempting to round out the picture a little in this chapter I shall continue to assume that morality(n) is articulated primarily in terms of norms, but, as I have mentioned, similar questions would arise if some other language were primary.

Criticism of norms

Law can often be criticised by reference to moral norms which are publicly acknowledged. But it is not clear that any equivalent account can be given of criticism of prevailing moral norms. For (tautologously) there will not be any publicly recognised moral norms to appeal to outside those which are publicly recognised at a given time. So outside of the set of publicly recognised norms there will be no other authoritative reference point for criticism; but if that is so, it seems to leave the publicly recognised norms having not merely a provisional authority but an absolute one (if they have any at all).

If my account leads into this impasse it is a serious problem. But the logical neatness of the argument just made conceals the fact that in the concrete situation there is a degree of flexibility which does in fact allow for criticism. The situation is one not unfamiliar to modern philosophy - it is the idea that criticism and improvement of beliefs does not have to have foundations to refer to. In that sense, there can be no appeal outside of shared understandings, though understandings can gradually change. But the field of actual and potential shared understandings is broad enough for there to be always possibilities of criticising some parts by reference to other parts; there does not have to be a firm

unchanging foundation at the bottom of it all (or above it all) for reasoned criticism and change to happen.[1]

It is not difficult to list several ways in which criticism can take place, though the list may not be exhaustive.

1) The publicly recognised norms of one society are not - especially in the modern world - isolated from those of others. Criticism of the norms of one society will sometimes involve comparison with those of another.

2) The publicly recognised norms of a society will not necessarily form a consistent set, nor (as I have pointed out in Chapter 9) will they all be at the same level. It will often be possible for criticism of certain norms to appeal to other norms which are also publicly recognised; for instance, criticism of a relatively specific rule may sometimes be criticised by reference to a broader principle. (This is not unlike the way in which legal argument can go on within a structure in which both temporary and local statute law, and also broader principles, are recognised).

3) There can be appeal to how inclusive a perceived consensus actually is - a point which will be relevant when we consider below the scope of morality(n).

4) There can be appeal to the underlying point of morality(n); that is, arguments may be made that currently recognised norms do not in fact tend to check undesirable motivations, or do this at unnecessary cost, or do not facilitate co-operation, and so on. (In line with my remarks above I do not see this as an attempt to find foundations by getting outside the sphere of public discourse to something incontrovertible, perhaps in evolutionary psychology; the appeal will still be to public understandings.) It is plausible that as a general understanding of morality(n), in something like

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[1] The metaphor of Neurath's boat is a familiar one in this context. The same metaphor is used in the context of criticism and change in the law by Dworkin (1986) p. 111.

the terms in which I have described it here, becomes more widespread, criticism of this kind would become more common.

In chapter 7 I distinguished four sorts of relationship (actually points in a spectrum) in which norms might stand to the underlying point of morality(n). What happens to the authority of norms when these differences in terms of underlying rationale come to be explicitly addressed (as they inevitably would be in an education which seeks to promote both understanding of morality(n) and a reflective disposition towards it)? For my categories (1) and (4) at opposite ends of the spectrum there should be no special problems. The kind of fundamental rules to which White refers in *TRAW* (such as the prohibitions on killing and grievous bodily harm) should be able to retain as much authority as they have ever had; there is no reason, here and now, to suppose they will ever cease to be part of morality(n).[2] The taboos which have no underlying rationale should lose any vestige of authority.

The case for the categories between is more difficult. Category (3) was of norms which give a particular shape to human life, though it can be recognised that there is no underlying argument for one shape rather than another. It is difficult to see how far norms in this category can survive critical reflection (a point related to that Williams (1985, Chapter 9) makes about the loss of ethical knowledge). I shall not attempt here to assess how far there is or is not significant loss; we may in any case have to accept that human societies are becoming, to stick to the metaphor, more shapeless than they used to be.

Category (2) perhaps raises the greatest problems. These are cases where there are (or it is widely believed that there are) good reasons of a consequentialist kind for having certain norms, but where there are many cases (not just rare exceptions) in

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2 White includes the norm against stealing. Despite Biblical precedent, this does not seem to me to be in the same category, since it is conceivable that the conventions establishing a sense of property could change so much as to render this norm inapplicable.

which there seems no harm in someone going against the norms, and even many where it is (still on consequentialist grounds) better for individuals in particular circumstances if they don't adhere to the norms. Suppose, to take up again an example I used in Chapter 7, that things will go better overall if people in society in general adhere to traditional norms of monogamy, where these are taken to include a prohibition on pre-marital sex (whether we could reliably know this is a further question). What then would be the advice to be given to a person wondering whether there is any reason not to enter into what might be a short-term cohabiting relationship? Part of it might be this: 'Don't, because things will go better overall if people in society in general adhere to traditional norms of monogamy'.[3] But this seems unlikely to be a very convincing reason to the individual.

Norms of category (2) are, then, may tend to lose their authority. But there may well be reasons, again of a consequentialist kind, for wanting them not to lose their authority too quickly. Society takes time to adjust; in the meantime there are different people trying to work to different norms, with consequent possibilities of confusion and conflict; and there are always the possibilities (mentioned in Chapter 8) of special pleading by individuals in their own interests - or to satisfy their own inclinations - sometimes at the expense of others. One factor that may help to moderate the pace of change is a recognition of the provisional authority of morality(n) as a whole. The idea here is that if people have some respect for morality(n) as a whole (respect for something they are involved in, as opposed to obedience to something alien), they will 'think twice' about going against it.[4] We can realistically envisage a situation in which society's norms

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3 Notice the difference between this and instances in category (1), albeit the difference may be one of degree; it is important that in the case of killing and injuring we can give other kinds of reason than just 'things will go better overall if people in society in general adhere to norms of not killing and injuring.

4 The colloquial phrase is quite appropriate. The reflective individual will think both about the particular situation, with its context and consequences, and about the wider shared system of expectations. His or her decision may go sometimes in favour of adherence to recognised norms, and sometimes not.

are taken to have a provisional authority, but are not, as a body, expected to remain static.

The scope of morality(n)

In this section I want to address a criticism that might be made of the whole notion of morality(n) as I have developed it so far. Though the criticism needs unpacking, it is basically this: that the morality of a society as I have conceived it is rather narrow and inward-looking. At first sight this criticism falls into a different category from the forms of criticism I was looking at in the last section. There I was concerned with ways in which norms in actual society (outside the pages of this thesis) could be criticised. Here I am addressing a criticism of my own argument. But there is a link between these sections, in that criticisms of what I shall call the *scope* of morality(n) could equally figure within a society's ongoing discussion and attempt to reach consensus about morality(n). Indeed, part of my reply to the criticism of the possible narrowness of morality(n) is precisely to point out that societal discussion of morality(n) holds open the possibility of its limitations being appreciated and addressed.

In what ways might morality(n) seem to be narrow and inward-looking? People sharing an understanding of morality(n) might think (i) that while they and their fellow-members are bound by the terms of this morality(n), it has no prescriptive force for anyone else. People might also think (ii) that the agreed norms tell them how to behave towards the fellow members of their own society, but do not tell them how to behave towards anyone else (let alone towards animals or the environment). And people might think (iii) that morality(n) predominantly requires them to hold off from interference with others, but does not make much demand on them to bring positive benefit to others.

These three possibilities give us three questions worth exploring here. (i) To what range of moral agents do the norms of morality(n) apply, that is, who is subject to those norms?
(ii) To what range of beneficiaries do the norms apply, that is, who or what needs to be taken into account in applying the norms?

(iii) Are the norms going to be minimal and predominantly negative, or more extensive and positive, in what they require?

The conception of morality(n) which I have outlined could be construed in a way I would not myself want to endorse. There is (relating to the first question) a variety of relativism which says (for example) 'English people should behave in this sort of way but we can't say anything about how other people should behave'. Then (relating to the second question) there can be an ethnocentric or otherwise group-centred morality in which people think they should behave well towards their fellow group members but do not think it matters how they behave towards anyone (or anything) else. And (relating to the third question) there can be a minimal morality in which people think that provided they respect other people's basic (negative) rights, it doesn't matter whether they do any positive good in the world.

I shall not attempt the empirical assessment which would be necessary to tell us how far such positions are widespread at the moment. The three positions put together may well form a picture the reader finds recognisable. But at the same time there are counterweights to those positions. Many people do think that basic moral norms apply to everyone, that they themselves should not just take fellow members of their group into account, and that they should positively help others. This mixed picture is the one that educators have to start from. My present question is whether the broad approach I am suggesting, working through criticism and the attempt to arrive at consensus, will inevitably tend towards an inward-looking and minimal sense of morality.

An English morality?

There is, if not a tradition, then at least a recent practice of certain educational initiatives being taken at national level[5] - including

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[5] For strong historical and political reasons, educational policies initiated by the British Government have usually been for England and Wales, with different provision for Scotland. For the public understanding of morality this might make particularly good sense, since there was once a strong Scottish tradition of public engagement in moral discourse (see MacIntyre 1987), and there have been numerous initiatives on values education in Scotland in recent years. More

the SCAA Forum. If the approach I am suggesting were to be encouraged and facilitated through the education system, this would be likely to give it a national focus. If there were an attempt, as English educational policy, to promote a public consensus on the nature and content of morality, it would be a consensus across the English public that such a policy would be aiming at. Does this mean that the consensus would be on 'English morality'? There are at least two aspects of my argument that might lead us to expect this.

One is the point first made in Chapter 7, that many moral norms are not the only possible response to certain features of the human condition; they are norms that give a particular shape to what Standish calls our moral geography, where other shapes would also be possible. There is, then, room for a degree of relativity in morality, and we should expect this to be reflected in the public understanding which is already present or which is arrived at in different parts of the world. For instance, there appear to be strong norms of filial piety in many parts of East Asia (an observation supported anecdotally by acquaintance with East Asian students); and in terms of the purposes of morality(n) such norms make good sense as a response to human vulnerability with advancing age. A shared sense of morality(n) in Western societies will equally need to respond to that (and arguably to find rather better ways of responding to it than are widespread now). But ideas of filial piety are not the only possible response and with such traditions not now in place in Western societies it is to be expected that Western understandings of the requirements of morality(n) in this respect will not be identical with East Asian ones. That is why, though the notion of morality(n) does not itself contain any culture-relativity, it was possible to say in Chapter 7, pursuing the analogy with positive law, that any set of moral norms will be the norms of a society.

A second element in the preceding discussion that could point toward a rather inward-looking understanding of morality is the

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recently still, there has been devolution to Wales. It is in recognition of these factors that I take England rather than Britain as my example here.

conception of moral authority that I have adumbrated. This is in line with the claim made in the Preamble of the SCAA Forum Statement (see Appendix 3), that the only authority claimed for the norms listed is 'the authority of consensus'. In the context, this can only mean 'consensus across our society'. Pragmatically, one can see how teachers and others involved in education may more confidently work with the understanding of the morality they are subscribing to as being that of their own society; they will seem to be making more modest claims if they are saying 'This is our society's morality' rather than 'This is (universal) morality *per se*'.

The more modest claim also fits with the point made first in Chapter 5, and taken up again in the discussion of moral authority, that 'people can agree on norms, not only in the sense that they agree that certain norms would be a good idea, but in the stronger sense that they agree to act according to the norms'. There is something here of a social contract understanding of morality: for mutual benefit, the members of a society agree with each other that they will regulate their behaviour towards each other in certain ways. And indeed, given the importance of a shared sense of membership of a community to which I referred in the last chapter, I do think this is an important element in the shared moral understanding of a society. At the same time, many would want to claim more than local validity for the norms that may in fact be agreed across their society. To support such a wider claim, what is needed is not an appeal to an empirical consensus which could only be demonstrated locally, but an appeal to the underlying point of morality(n).[6]

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[6] One philosophical view is that empirical consensus cannot be a basis of any kind for validity. In my sketch of morality(n) I have tried to show how consensus can be taken as a basis, if not for validity, then at least for authority. But having made that move, I cannot claim that the authority is universal if the consensus itself is not.
Smith and Standish in *TRAW* seem to have interpreted the SCAA Forum as claiming that a consensus found empirically in Britain somehow establishes universal validity. I do not think this was ever the 'official' SCAA position but it is possible that people speaking for or about the Forum have sometimes given this impression. Marianne Talbot, in her role as expositor of the Forum's work, seemed - until challenged - to slip into making the claim of universal validity on the basis of an empirical consensus (only demonstrable locally), at a meeting of the London

One needs, I think, both a recognition of local consensus and also a recognition that the norms on which there is consensus do not apply only to members of the group within which the consensus is arrived at. (It would be a good thing if English football fans undertook not to fight each other; but not so good if this goes with the idea that there is nothing wrong with fighting the fans of foreign clubs in the streets of French or German cities.) Fortunately, there is no incompatibility here. There is no incoherence in the idea that an agreement with others of one's own group to observe certain norms in relation to each other can co-exist with a recognition that those same norms apply to members of the group in their relations to others outside the group. To take up Mary Warnock's example from Chapter 7, it is not, so far as I can see, absurd that there might be an agreed rule within a school that there is to be no bullying or theft within the school, co-existing with the recognition that there is to be no bullying of or theft from anyone outside the school either. Indeed this could also be part of what members of the school have agreed with each other. So also across a whole society, a shared public acknowledgement that theft is wrong will certainly be understood as implying that members of the society should not steal from each other, but will at the same time be a shared acknowledgement that stealing from anyone is wrong. (One implication of this is that if shame is to figure at all in people's motivation for observing the norms, shame before one's fellow group members may be felt not only for transgressing the norms against fellow group members, but for transgressing those same norms also against others.)

It will be part of the responsibility of educators to see that the developing understanding of morality on the part of their students does not become too inward-looking. They may do this in part by referring to the underlying point of morality(n). Since morality(n) is a response to elements of the human condition which are in no way limited by national boundaries, there is no inherent reason

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why its most important norms should not be universal ones (universal at least across human beings, rather than across rational beings as in Kant). Educators wishing to resist inwardness should very much be helped by the evident fact that cultures and countries are not in impermeable compartments. Cultures co-exist in a classroom and with increasing travel and through the media people who are not fellow-citizens are frequently encountered. Promoting within one society a shared sense of a morality which is not confined to that society ought to be easier now than at any time before.

Only human?

How far will the requirements of morality(n) be understood as applying to actions of which the major effects are not on human beings? There are several approaches which seem to be compatible with an underlying appreciation of the importance of morality(n). On some issues, where damage to the environment makes the world a worse place to live in, even from the point of view solely of human interests, the norms prohibiting that damage can be straightforwardly part of morality(n). Where that is not the case, some would see norms against harming animals or the environment as extensions to morality(n) - that is, part of an extended morality(n) - and ones which are from a logical point of view gratuitous, even though explicable. This is Mackie's (1977 pp. 194-5) approach in relation to animals.

Another possibility, which may more clearly apply to the environment than to animals, is to see the concerns for the non-human as not part of morality(n) at all, but as part of morality or ethics in a broader sense. On this view, taking action for the sake of the environment might be part of some people's conception of a good life but would not be a part of a shared morality(n). Griffin (1996 p. 127) takes this view.

Others see norms against harming animals as rationally required extensions from an initial appreciation of the way in which morality(n) serves human interests; given that morality(n) requires norms against the causing of suffering, it is simply

irrational not to recognise that these norms apply to suffering as such, whether human or animal. This is Peter Singer's approach, anticipated by Bentham; and my approach in *TAV* (see p. 108, n.4). Something different, however, needs to be said about the environment, which cannot in the same literal sense suffer.

Yet another approach in applying norms to animals and the environment is to extend one's sense of the community of which one sees oneself to be a member. We are all - humans and non-humans - animals sharing the biosphere; for that matter, we are all - animals, plants, even mountains - part of the same common world (cf.*TAV* p. 96 n.15; Clark 1977, 1993).

For my argument here, there is no need to decide for one or other of these approaches. They all exist, and not only among philosophers. They exist already within that public whose understanding of morality I am talking about. In any attempt, then, to arrive at a more widely and explicitly shared understanding of morality, these points of view would be represented. To speak only of England, it is unlikely that a shared sense of morality would not include norms on the treatment of animals and the environment. Certainly this held good of the SCAA Forum Statement, which includes a section on the environment within which animals are mentioned. The item relating to animals - that we should 'understand our responsibilities for other species' - probably represents fairly well the present state of agreement. It does not attempt to say what these responsibilities are; but it does, importantly, rule out the idea that we don't have any responsibilities towards animals. That is enough to enable even this apparently rather vacuous prescription to function as a reference point in the way I suggested in Chapter 9.

A minimal morality?

The question of how minimal or otherwise a shared morality(n) may be cuts across the question about animals and the environment; there can, for instance, be a minimal conception of responsibilities towards animals - that we should not be

deliberately cruel towards an animal - or far more extensive conceptions. But it would apply also even within a morality in which no responsibilities were recognised towards anything non-human. The spectrum extends from the most minimal morality of a recognition of certain basic and negative rights[7] to the most extensive utilitarian conception - not actually held by most utilitarians - that everyone ought at all times, and at the expense of any projects of their own, to be doing all they can to promote human happiness. It will often be possible also to place conceptions of morality which are not expressed in a language of norms somewhere on the same spectrum. Various conceptions of virtue ethics will fall at different points between the extremes, depending on the virtues stressed and their interpretation, and especially on what weight is given to the virtue of benevolence and how that is interpreted. An ethics of care is likely to encourage people to 'put themselves out' for at least some others, but nevertheless it may fall towards the minimal end of the spectrum because caring is in the first instance a response towards the perceived needs of particular others who are immediately present.[8] Within philosophy of education, the issue of where our conception of morality should be placed on this spectrum has been extensively discussed by White (1982).

It may seem that a consensus approach to the content of morality(n) will tend towards a conception of responsibilities which will do as much as, but no more than, is necessary to satisfy the interests of those who are party to the consensus. This is by no means necessarily so, since those who are party to the consensus need not be motivated only by self-interest. But suppose it is so; then the content of the consensus depends very much on how inclusive is the process by which the consensus is arrived at. People in comfortable circumstances might agree on norms which would require them to do little more than refrain from interfering with each other; a consensus which includes the

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7 See Appendix 4 for an argument that such a conception is too minimal to be viable as a basis for moral education.

8 Cf. *TAV* p. 80. Also, cf. Peter Singer's (1972, 1979) arguments on the obligation to relieve famine with Noddings (1984). (For a Kantian perspective on the same issue, cf. O'Neill 1986).

homeless, people with disabilities, people with chronic illness, and so on, would be unlikely to be so minimal.[9]

Again, there are heavy implications for education. By its nature, compulsory formal schooling takes in a wide cross-section of any population. Apart from a minority whose parents choose to educate them at home, formal schooling takes in everyone at a certain stage in their life. So if there could be a consensus to which everyone in all the schools in a society had agreed, there could hardly be any way in which any more inclusive consensus could be arrived at. It should be possible in schools, if anywhere, to see that people do not grow up with a conception of morality which overlooks the needs of those who are less well placed than themselves. If, as a society, we do end up with a shared public understanding of morality which is minimal and inward looking, it will be at least in part because teachers have not taken up some of the opportunities which schooling makes possible.

In Chapter 7, note 4, I referred to Cupitt's view that morality can for the most part be left to look after itself. I have shown, I think, that the evolution and renegotiation of the rules which Cupitt has in mind cannot be an automatic process; it is one that takes knowledge, intelligence, and discussion, and hence it is very much a process in which education, including formal education, has an important role.

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9 I made a similar point in Chapter 11 when discussing whether consensus can ground the authority of norms. In various ways the same point is present, of course, in Habermas, Rawls, and Hare.

Chapter Thirteen
The public understanding of morality as an aspect of citizenship education

The need for an institutional basis

I have sketched an understanding of morality(n) as having a provisional authority in being subject both to consensus and to criticism and change in a broadly democratic way. But I have also admitted that we lack the formal processes of criticism and change which exist for the law; there is not the obvious institutional basis for morality(n) that there is for law. At least two potential consequences of this fact are worth noting. One is that certain persons or groups may have disproportionate influence in the forming or changing of public understandings of morality and its content. The mass media, for instance, are channels of influence through which particular people may exercise influence out of all proportion to that which their views would have in a Habermasian ideal speech situation. A second potential consequence is a lack of any co-ordination in the 'message' that is getting across to the general public. This, as I mentioned in Chapter 9, is one reason for not relying on parents as the sole agents of moral education; for reasons I expanded on in that chapter, some degree of co-ordination is essential to morality(n).[1]

It should come as no surprise that I consider formal education - that is, schooling - could be the main channel through which the basis for a shared public understanding of morality can be institutionalised. No other social institution has as much opportunity - across generations - of reaching parts of society which other institutions cannot reach. This is indeed one respect in which critics of schooling such as Illich were right when they held that school has become the Church of our modern society; I am, if you like, trying to pick up one positive aspect of that

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[1] I do not wish to downplay the role of families, of the media, of politicians, and just of everyday interaction between adults, in promoting and maintaining the public understanding of morality. Education could not be fulfilling its own role in this respect if we did not find its 'message' reflected and reinforced in these other settings. But I do want to argue that a public educational underpinning is needed.

analogy. At the same time there are important differences between the way that the Church[2] might once have promoted a shared understanding of morality and the way that one can now envisage schooling doing so.

The most obvious difference is that the Church works with a broader interpretation of morality which refers to a quite different source of authority from that I have envisaged here. This difference in 'curriculum', though, could be exaggerated. In one direction, there has always been at least some overlap in content between the morality preached by the Church and any likely content of morality(n). In the other direction, it is no part of my argument that the only ethical or indeed spiritual concern of schools should be with morality(n). Schools should, as a Church does, have an eye to the broader ethical or spiritual development of their pupils; here the difference is, as I brought out in Chapter 3, that secular schools cannot work to a single model of spiritual or indeed ethical development, given the scope for individual variation and choice.

Having stressed that what I am talking about here is not the whole of a school's concern with 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development', or with PSE, or even with moral education, I return to the responsibility of schools in maintaining morality(n). In this respect the most important difference between schools and Churches is, so to speak, in teaching method rather than curriculum. Churches have often been somewhat static and dogmatic in their teachings. I do not intend that as a criticism; it is arguable that static and dogmatic, in certain respects, is just what Churches should be. But I do maintain that static and dogmatic is what schools should not be in *their* 'moral teachings'.

Why not? There are several reasons which I have already anticipated, so that I need only list them briefly here.

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2 To avoid complications in what is not a central part of my argument, I shall speak here in a way applicable to an established Church like the Church of England; what I say could generally be adapted to other varieties of organised religion and other religions.

1) There would be a risk that a certain norms would be set in stone when they ought to be open to criticism and revision.

2) By seeking merely to promulgate a set of norms already decided on, schools would make it less likely that individuals would see these norms as having authority over them, for reasons I have set out in the previous chapter. In particular, any centralised procedure, through which some government body sought to promulgate norms through the schools, would be likely to reinforce the appearance of morality as a alien imposition.

3) To put the same point in a social/political mode, the promulgation of a predetermined set of norms as if that were the last word would be undemocratic. A small body of people would be laying something down for the rest of their contemporaries in society (this is akin to White's (1998) complaint about sectionalism in the determination of the curriculum). Further, what was laid down would be expected to have force not only for the present generation but for the next generation and even (to the extent that the norms were set in stone) for further generations beyond. This is what I dubbed in *TAV* (p. 123) 'generational imperialism' (see also Haydon 1993b).

These are some reasons why the kind of education for public understanding of morality which I have in mind should not be a matter of the transmission of predetermined norms. But the most important reason why it cannot be just this, is that, recognising the diversity and confusion existing in people's thinking about morality in our society, education has to address the nature of morality itself.

This is a point that I have made several times before, from Chapter 1 onwards. It should perhaps be unnecessary to repeat the point that I do not see it as the task of education to put across a particular understanding of morality as the correct one. It is not for politicians or for teachers in state schools to decide, for instance, that a secular naturalistic understanding of morality is correct and a religiously-based understanding wrong, or *vice*

versa. This would leave us in an impasse *if different understandings of morality were mutually exclusive.* But if it is possible for citizens in a plural society to converge on a certain understanding of morality which will be workable for certain public purposes, *while not having to reject other understandings of morality,* then it will be possible for education actively to promote a certain understanding of morality, without excluding or downgrading other views.[3]

The idea of morality in the narrow sense, as I have outlined it, would not be an unfamiliar one to many people. While that is not helpful to any claim I might want to make to originality in this thesis - any originality has to lie in the use I make of the idea in the overall argument, not in the idea itself - it is actually important to my overall argument that the idea is one that can be widely intelligible and widely seen to have point. I have tried to expand sufficiently on the idea of morality(n) to show that it does not obviously collapse before worries about moral motivation or moral authority. And I have tried to do all of this in language and arguments which do not rely on specialist philosophical understanding.[4]

I could reinforce this point pragmatically by appealing to the constraints under which the professional education of teachers now operates.[5] One might well argue that all persons entering into the teaching profession should be encouraged to reflect on the problematical nature of morality. But one also has, to some extent,

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3 On p. 36 I said that ideas about morality co-existing in our society 'are by no means all compatible with each other'. My present point does not contradict this; it requires that the understanding of morality(n) be compatible with a variety of other ideas about morality, but not that all of those other ideas be compatible with each other.

4 Again, that means that I cannot claim originality in any contribution I may be making to moral philosophy as such; but it is important to my position that there should be a workable conception that can be articulated in non-specialist language and arguments. (There is a sense, then, in which philosophical depth or metaethical subtlety would actually be undermining my own purposes here.)

5 For more on the deficiencies of professional education in respect of teachers' role in values education, and on what could be done, see below, and Haydon (1996b) and *TAV* Ch. 13.

to proceed from where we are and accommodate to the climate of the times. That we are living in an age of performance indicators, succinctly expressed targets, measurement of competences, etc., etc., is too familiar an idea in the educational world to need documenting. My accommodation to this is to say to the powers that be, in effect:

'You apparently want teachers to have some sort of responsibility for the moral state of the nation. You ought to realise that teachers are likely to be just as confused about morality as anyone else in our culture. But it is not going to happen that all teachers become moral philosophers. So here is a workable way of understanding morality which you can induct teachers into and expect them to pass on to their pupils. Just one piece of subtlety is required, which is vital, but should not be too difficult for anyone to grasp: namely that this understanding of morality is not to be put across as the single correct one; there is to be no authoritative suggestion that this is all there is to morality, or that other ways of conceiving of it are wrong. It is to be put across in a pragmatic spirit, as a workable conception on which citizens in a plural society ought to be able to converge. Since your educational policy is pragmatic through-and-through, you shouldn't find this a problem.'

Where in the curriculum?

It is in a similar pragmatic spirit that I think it worth asking (starting from where we are now, in the English schooling system) though which part of the curriculum an understanding of morality(n) is to be 'delivered'[6]. Of course, there are things to be said, which I shall not be saying here, about the overall organisation and ethos of the school, and about co-ordination of what is to be dealt with in different parts of the curriculum. But English educational experience over the last decade suggests that if there is some particular area of understanding that needs attention, it will need a location in the curriculum, and perhaps even in the timetable. I want to argue in this section that the appropriate curricular location for a focus on morality(n) is within citizenship education; and citizenship education itself provides

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6 'Delivery' is a piece of contemporary education-speak which seems to me to demand scare quotes, but I shall follow the convention below and use it straight.

supporting evidence for the difficulty of working in a cross-curricular way. The original National Curriculum as established by the ERA of 1988 was supposed to contain cross-curricular themes, one of which was citizenship. But in many schools, given the demands of teaching the compulsory subjects, very little was done about a 'theme' like citizenship which was not itself to be treated as a subject.

The revised National Curriculum which is shortly to be introduced will make citizenship education, in secondary schools, compulsory. At the same time PSHE will be recognised as something which all schools are expected to engage in, and primary schools will be expected to include the preparation for citizenship which is appropriate for their age range within PSHE. Meanwhile, religious education remains (almost, in legislative terms, as a hang-over from an earlier age) as a compulsory part of the curriculum. Some other countries have a part of their curriculum labelled 'moral education' or 'ethics' or something of that sort. In those countries, that part of the curriculum would be a prime candidate for attention to morality(n). But in England now it seems to me we have three main candidates: RE, PSHE, and Citizenship Education.

RE is worth mentioning in this list just because its claims are likely to be too easily dismissed within much of philosophy of education, where it has been almost an orthodoxy for some years that morality had better be treated in a secular spirit and not muddled up with religion. Unfortunately this view, which in many ways I share, has not been supported systematically within the practice of teaching, and of teacher education in particular. Most teachers have little or no training in teaching about morality or moral issues (even though it may turn out that they are expected to contribute to PSHE);[7] the teachers who can be expected to have some such training are those of RE. Thus an argument can be made that the people best equipped to deal with questions of

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7 There seems to have been rather little co-ordination on this matter between the TTA and bodies such as SCAA, QCA and OFSTED.

morality are teachers of RE.[8] But there are at least two difficulties with this view. One is that, even though individual teachers of RE may be of any faith or none, and may see it as part of their professionalism that they are not setting out to promote religious belief, the public understanding of morality(n) will not be clarified if it is seen as tied up institutionally with the teaching of religion. If RE teachers are at present the people best equipped to teach about morality, it would be better if they did it under a different name. A second difficulty is that RE teachers will, quite rightly, be concerned with morality or ethics in a broader sense than morality(n).

If RE is put on one side, this leaves PSHE and Citizenship Education. Since these two are meant to be combined in the primary school, it is only at secondary school that they could be either complementary or alternative routes for the delivery of an understanding of morality(n). This is significant, because it is especially at secondary level, I suggest, that what we might call the ethos of these two areas of concern will begin to diverge.

The ethos of PSHE is very often one in which the 'personal' is dominant over the 'social'; the informed choice of individuals is central.[9] Thus on matters of sexual behaviour and of substance abuse the emphasis is often, not to bring pre-existing norms to bear as constraints, but to try to ensure that individuals know what they are or might be doing, understand the consequences, and make their own decision. I am not criticising this emphasis; indeed I think it is essential. My point is only that the ethos of PSHE may be one in which talking about morality, without appearing to moralise, may be quite difficult - unless morality itself is treated in terms of individual informed choice.

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8 Janet Orchard, a research student at the Institute of Education, made this argument forcefully to me in relation to the teaching of citizenship generally.

9 The coincidence in terminology with an idea which is central to much of health care ethics (in liberal societies) is not accidental; indeed given that choices liable to affect people's health are an important concern of PSHE, it is essentially the same idea we are dealing with.

The ethos of citizenship education, in this country, does not yet exist, and is thereby still open to influence. I see no reason why citizenship education should not, as much as PSHE, encourage respect for the autonomy of individuals. But while in PSHE individual choice may be central, citizenship education will more naturally interpret autonomy within a democratic model, recognising that the power of one can restrict the autonomy of another, and seeing the maintenance of autonomy for all as dependent on practices in which decision-making and responsibility can be shared. It is within this way of thinking, it seems to me, that the notion of morality(n) more readily fits.

In Chapter 1 I noted opposing tendencies in discourse about morality. On the one hand the 'personalisation' of morality, the idea that ultimately morality comes down to individual choice; on the other, appeals to morality in public discourse which presuppose that there is something objective or at least intersubjectively shared to be appealed to. One could almost say that we have a PSHE model of morality and a citizenship model of morality. Both have something importantly right about them, each can be supported philosophically (except to the extent that a philosophical defence of either has to recognise the force of the other). The PSHE model might draw (rather selectively) from Hare (especially his earlier writings) and John Wilson (e.g. 1973 p. 21) to support the idea that an individual's morality is what ultimately matters most to that individual, what he or she chooses to live by, so that pursuing pleasure or money could - if they could stick to it consistently - be the basis of someone's morality. The business of education would be to try to see that the individual's choice is informed by knowledge of the consequences of one kind of choice or another, including the likely consequences for others. The citizenship model might be supported by arguments (which could draw again on Hare among others[10]) in defence of norms to guide choice, and for the importance of shared norms. What I have been emphasising in this thesis is clearly the citizenship model. It sets out to make morality a shared

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10 It is Hare's (1981) distinction between two levels of moral thinking which makes it possible to draw on his work in support of both models.

enterprise, in one sense existing as a system independent of the individual, yet - like the law on a democratic model - not alien.

Provided these ideas are not pushed too far in the direction of arbitrary choice on the one hand, or of alienation with no personal involvement on the other, they are not contradictory. But there is the possibility in practice of their coming apart. There is even a possibility, if no attempt is made at co-ordination across a school, that the understanding of morality could fail to be addressed at all. For suppose the teachers of PSHE happen, as individuals, to subscribe to a citizenship model of morality, and thus think that talking about morality is not part of their business as PSHE teachers. And suppose that the teachers of citizenship subscribe to a PSHE model, and thus think that citizenship is a matter of law and politics and has nothing to say about morality. Then pupils could go through a school encountering no serious consideration of morality at all.

Admittedly haphazard arrangements would be unlikely to fall out with such neat alignments. But the point stands that in schools as they are there may be no systematic attempt to address ideas about morality at all. In this thesis I have argued that there is indeed a diversity of ideas about morality in our society. If we think of morality in a broad sense, or the whole area that some philosophers would prefer to label ethics - the area which deals with the question of how one is to live, and all the values and choices which that calls into play - then we could reasonably expect both PSHE and RE to be making a contribution to individuals' development in this respect. But there is a twofold task which relates rather closely to citizenship. It is in part to ensure that citizens are aware of the diversity of understandings about morality within their society; this is what I argued for in Chapter 2. And it is also to support a particular understanding of morality - morality(n) - which is itself important to citizenship. (The two parts of this task are complementary, because teachers could hardly delineate morality(n) without reference to ways in which it differs from other ideas of morality.) I am not arguing that this task could not be undertaken if there were no area of the

curriculum labelled citizenship education; but given that we are to have such a subject, and that its content is still to some extent to be determined, it makes sense to advocate the inclusion of morality(n) within its subject matter.[11]

The role of teachers

It is not uncommon for a thesis in philosophy of education to conclude with suggestions about ways in which the practices of teachers would need to change to take account of the arguments of the thesis. Little attention may be paid to any ways in which the arguments might actually come to have an influence on the practice of teachers.

An earlier draft of this thesis had a role for a quango charged with promoting the public understanding of morality, and called, by analogy with several existing bodies, the Public Understanding of Morality Authority - the PUMA. I liked the conceit, and it played a certain structural role in the argument. But it was clear that actually advocating the setting-up of such a body would be a non-starter. The general public would see such a body as an attempt by government to impose a certain idea of morality, and teachers would see it - in addition - as yet another imposition on their workload. These reactions would be quite understandable. If the public understanding of morality is to be promoted, something a little more subtle - yet open - will be needed. I suggest in this section that the task could be taken in hand by teachers themselves.

Many teachers feel both that heavy demands are being made on them as moral educators, and that the part they are already playing in this respect is not being recognised. Among other tasks, they are expected to maintain discipline in the classroom and its surroundings, to transmit society's norms, to have some concern for the moral development of individual pupils, to promote respect and tolerance for differences, and to encourage

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11 The arguments of this section are relatively underdeveloped and undersupported. In the gestation of the thesis this is the most recently developing part. I hope to take it further in a forthcoming pamphlet in the Philosophy of Education Society's IMPACT series.

understanding and reflectiveness about values. (These items are listed in no particular order, and questions could clearly be raised about their compatibility with each other.) If teachers feel that all these demands are being made on them, then asking them to put across some particular understanding of morality could be perceived as just one more demand.

To avoid this impression it is important to make clear that the kind of understanding of morality I have been talking about can be helpful in making sense of and integrating the apparently multifarious demands mentioned. If I am right about the possibilities of confusion and cross-purposes in understandings of morality in the wider society, there is no reason to think that people who go into teaching are immune. Nor is there, at present, any expectation that teachers as they emerge from their professional education will share any particular understanding of morality. Indeed, the majority of teachers in their training are probably given little if any encouragement even to clarify their own understandings in this respect. Individual views about morality may, after all, be considered to be part of teachers' personal life, which it is not for professional training to concern itself with.

Yet even as things are now, these same people will be expected, as part of their professional role - albeit an ill-defined part - to have some dealings with questions of morality in the public context of education. It would not be surprising if many teachers felt even more confused than the representative member of the general public. And it would be still less surprising if many felt, if asked explicitly to promote the public understanding of morality, that they were being asked to impose something alien on pupils, and wished to have nothing to do with it.

If they did nothing else, the arguments of this thesis might offer to teachers a way of understanding morality which they could feel they could work with. But similar arguments should be able also to help teachers to see the relationship between various of the demands on them. Passing on from one generation to the next a

knowledge of and commitment to the norms of society is one of the functions of education, because morality in the narrow sense requires a degree of stability in its norms. But the stability is not absolute and the commitment is provisional. So - in addition to whatever value is assigned to individual autonomy or critical thinking for its own sake - it is important that teachers encourage pupils to think about the point of society's norms. Since the continuing function of morality(n) requires a degree of consensus and the possibility of change through a changing consensus, it is important that teachers initiate pupils into the processes by which criticism can go on and changes can come about. Since all of this happens in a context of considerable diversity of ideas about morality and of values of other kinds, it is important that pupils are made aware of the diversity. And since teachers have to be able to talk to their pupils, and pupils talk to each other, in ways that all can understand and which are not split off from the wider language of public discourse, it is important that teachers are able to work with a variety of languages of evaluation, including particularly a language of norms and a language of virtues.

All this clearly would make heavy demands on the professional preparation which teachers need for their role. Even supposing that some changes do come about, there are still many teachers in post who will have had little or no preparation for a role in the promotion of the public understanding of morality. Even to such teachers, as individuals, I hope that the ideas I am putting forward will help them to see that it is possible to have a conception of morality which people could converge on, without particular metaphysical commitments, without hypocrisy, without authoritarianism. And the contribution of any individual teachers towards spreading such an understanding will be valuable. Nevertheless, it will not be possible for such an understanding to become general across the profession without some institutional means of co-ordination.

If teachers are liable to be suspicious of anything which might seem to be imposed by some body or agency from outside the profession, there might still be another possibility. If an

understanding of morality, which teachers could feel comfortable with, could initially be shared across the teaching profession from within, then the profession itself, through education and without imposition, could try to spread that understanding more widely through the general public. This could not, of course, be achieved without channels of communication and policy-making existing for the profession as a whole. There would have to be a professional body working in such a way that teachers could feel themselves to be part of a single profession sharing certain commitments and understandings; it would also have to be able to listen to and respond to the general public.

There is to be, for England, a General Teaching Council, a professional body playing roughly the role for teachers that the General Medical Council plays for doctors.[12] Quite how it will interpret its role remains to be seen, but among its other tasks will be that (already performed for many other professions by their appropriate professional bodies, but so far lacking in teaching) of drawing up and promulgating a code of conduct for teachers. It is possible to envisage that the GTC could extend this part of its remit to take on board the development of a shared professional understanding of teachers' role in promoting an understanding of morality. This would be a plausible extension for two reasons: first, because a shared professional code of conduct within a profession is in some ways analogous to a shared morality(n) within the wider society, and can be expected to overlap though not to coincide in its content.[13] If one is asking teachers to consider the function and content of a professional code, it is not a large step to asking them to think about the function and content of morality(n) within society in general.

The second reason why the extension is plausible presupposes a difference between a professional code and morality(n). A shared

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12 It will commence its work on 1 September 2000. Its chief executive designate has been appointed.

13 There are many relevant discussions of the relation between professional codes of ethics and morality or ethics in general. See, e.g., Williams (1995) and Koehn (1994), and my review of Koehn (Haydon 1996a).

morality(n) will probably not, in a liberal society, include an articulation of some collective overall goal,[14] whereas a professional code often will include an articulation of overall goals in the light of which particular norms are to be understood. Thus, in broad terms, an understanding of and positive evaluation of health will often form the focus of codes of ethics in the health care professions, and more particular articulations of the goal and of the responsibilities of the practitioners in relation to that goal will be one of the factors distinguishing, say, the code of ethics of doctors from that of nurses. For teaching, an articulation of an overall goal will presumably mention education, but is likely to unpack that idea further in multifaceted ways. It should, I would argue, include an acknowledgement of the role teachers have in the public aspect of moral education.

John Tomlinson, one of the authors of a draft Code of Ethical Principles for the Teaching Profession,[15] and an advocate of the GTC, has written:

'teachers .... discharge public responsibility for the socialisation and value-world of the next generation. They must be expected to encourage personal and social responsibility in their learners, and accept it for themselves.' (Tomlinson 1995 p. 185).

Part of the role of the GTC will be to articulate this expectation on behalf of the profession as a whole. Tomlinson's wording 'encouraging personal and social responsibility in their learners' might be interpreted as referring particularly to PSHE, but my suggestion is that this expectation should be expanded, and that one recognised aspect of this expanded expectation should be the promotion of the public understanding of morality as an aspect of

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14 Tony Blair's call for a new 'moral purpose' for the nation (mentioned in Chapter 1) is liable to introduce further obfuscation into the present state of the public understanding of morality. Quite apart from the tendency to tie moral questions rather closely to matters of sexual activity (which clearly Blair avoided in the case of Kosova), we can ask what the shared purpose is supposed to be. Might it be the maintenance of morality(n) itself? The debate between liberalism and communitarianism is relevant here, since these positions often differ on whether a society is to be seen as having some shared moral purpose.

15 Published by UCET.

citizenship education. In this way (within the relatively open framework of National Curriculum citizenship education as currently envisaged) the profession could take the initiative and would have a good chance of taking individual teachers along with it.

Epilogue: The moral development of society

I finished Part IV in a rather pragmatic spirit; here, as befits a conclusion, I shall be more ambitious and upbeat, discussing nothing less than the moral development of society. I do not, however, want to leave behind my background in analytic philosophy and indulge in flights of fancy; I want to give an intelligible sense to the idea.

I have stressed that what I am discussing in this thesis does not address all aspects of moral education, let alone all aspects of personal and social education or of a school's concern for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In so far as this is a thesis about moral education, it differs from most such theses in that it says little about the moral development of individuals, and in certain ways is more concerned with society than with the individual. In Chapter 3 I sketched a rather crude notion of moral development by which it could be said that someone has developed morally to the extent that he or she has come to share the values which are central to a given society. That way of conceiving of moral development, even where the focus is on individuals, leaves out a great deal; it says nothing, for instance, about individual attitudes and feelings towards others or about the degree of responsibility the individual takes for his or her own behaviour. Even from the more specific standpoint of the account of morality(n) outlined here, an interpretation of development which turns on adherence to shared norms would have to be expanded to include the development of the capacities which individuals need if they are to engage in the processes of criticism and consensus-building. But rather than build up the notion of individual moral development, what I want to do here is to shift the focus onto the development of society.

To see why this may be worth doing it is interesting to contrast talk of moral development with talk of moral decline. While the former usually refers to the development of individuals, the latter is more likely to be predicated of society as a whole; indeed the thought that our society is in some sort of moral decline is quite a

common one. Smith and Standish, for instance, refer to the Bulger and Lawrence murders as 'symptomatic of a more general moral destitution in our society' (*TRAW* p. vii). The thought here is not simply that people, individually, are behaving in a less moral way than people used to (indeed Smith and Standish rightly show that we could argue the other way). It is the thought of something lacking 'in the moral as well as the social fabric of society' (p. viii). When people subscribe to such notions of moral decline, it is not uncommon for them to suggest (though Smith and Standish are exceptions) that the solution to the decline is to be found in the moral development of individuals, understood in something like the limited way to which I have referred: that is, that we have to find ways, through moral education, of getting individuals to behave better (as judged by widely agreed norms). So the moral development of individuals seems to be regarded as the cure for the moral decline of society. There is at least an asymmetry here that invites examination.

Interestingly, though it is often forgotten, the ERA of 1988 required schools to have a curriculum which would promote 'the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school *and of society*' (my italics). On the face of it, a contribution from schools to the moral development *of society*, not only of individuals, could be just what is needed to counteract a moral decline of society - if, that is, we can make sense of the idea of the moral development of society.

Interpretations of the development of society

I shall try here to bring out what we might understand by the moral development of society, by taking up again the contrast I made in Chapter 3 between spiritual and moral development, but now transposing each of these onto a social plane. I argued there that there is more likely to be social agreement on what constitutes moral development than on what constitutes spiritual development *of individuals.* Does the same apply when the development of society is in question? We need first to see how we can make sense of the idea of any kind of development *of society.*

I suggest that we can interpret the idea of the development of society in two ways, reductionist and non-reductionist. In a reductionist sense, the development of society is nothing over and above the development of individual members of the society. Consider one of the other categories in the 1988 Act: physical development. If we can make sense at all of the physical development *of society*, it is probably only in the reductionist sense, in which that development is nothing over and above the physical development of (all, or most, or many) individual members of the society. Similarly in a reductionist way it would be possible to speak of the economic development of society and mean *nothing but* the fact that (all, or most, or many) individuals were becoming better off.

But such thoroughly reductionist interpretations do not look plausible for most categories of development. Economists speaking of economic development are not in fact using the notion in a reductionist way; they will have in mind many processes - trade, banking and so on - which are inherently *social* processes. And with the rather notional idea of the physical development of society we can contrast the idea that a society is becoming healthier. This certainly includes the idea that individual members of the society are likely to be healthier than individual members of the same society at some previous time, but it is doubtful whether it can be reduced purely to that. For instance, a society which has introduced clean air legislation, in which smoking in public places comes to be frowned on and in which provision is made for safe cycling and walking to school and work might be judged to have become a healthier society. This assessment might be made even without detailed knowledge of trends in individual health, because part of what constitutes a change to a healthier society would be a change in public attitudes and policy.

In Haydon (1994), discussing secularisation, I followed Hirst in describing this process as involving 'a decay in the use of religious concepts and beliefs'. It is individuals who have or don't have

beliefs and who use or don't use concepts. But suppose that very many individuals suffer a loss of faith but keep this to themselves, while continuing in all their interactions with others to express the same beliefs as before and use the same concepts. Publicly, little would have changed, so there would not in fact have been a secularisation of society. Now suppose the opposite: that individuals carry on privately, in their own thinking, having a religious faith and using religious concepts, but that these beliefs only get expressed in private to like-minded others and that religious concepts fall out of use in public discourse. This *would* be a case of the secularisation of society. In other words, secularisation is a change in society - and at least in an evaluatively neutral sense a development in society[1] - which cannot be reduced to changes in the thinking of a multiplicity of individuals. It is, above all, a change in public discourse.

Development of society: spiritual and moral

How does the reductionist/non-reductionist distinction apply to the ideas of the moral and spiritual development of society? The limited notion of moral development to which I referred above would fit easily with a reductionist interpretation of the moral development of society. A society will be developing morally just to the extent that the individuals within it tend to behave better (from the standpoint of publicly agreed norms). Many of those who call for moral education to counteract violence, teenage pregnancy, and other perceived ills in society, and thus to reverse the perceived moral decline, may recognise nothing but this reductionist idea of the moral improvement of society (and it is an interpretation which is compatible with the little that has been said about the moral development of society in official

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[1] In the evaluatively neutral sense a change can be described as a development whether it is considered to be for better or for worse (there may be certain other conditions of a factual rather than evaluative nature which a process of change has to meet if it is to be appropriately described as development, but these are not my concern here). In an evaluatively positive sense of development, secularisation will only be counted as development by someone who sees it as a change for the better; to the opposite point of view it will be a matter of decline rather than development. Indeed secularisation might to such a viewpoint be a case of the spiritual decline of society.

documents). But it is a crude account, and there is room for a less reductionist one.

A reductionist interpretation also appears possible for the spiritual development of society: a society will be developing spiritually to the extent that individuals within it are developing spiritually. But in this case, since we would have no observable criteria and no shared standpoint as to what constitutes improvement, we would not in fact - in a plural society - be able to apply such a notion of the spiritual development of society. A reductionist interpretation in this case would amount to no interpretation at all. But it is also not clear - in a plural society - whether any non-reductionist account is available. To see whether a non-reductionist account is possible, both for spiritual and for moral development of society, we need to look to the nature of public discourse.

Bringing together the points made so far, I can suggest that the moral development of society will be a matter of changes for the better in the moral aspects of the public discourse of a society; and similarly for spiritual development of a society. This is still to use the minimal evaluatively positive notion; but how do we know what to count as a change for the better within public discourse? Here it will be helpful to introduce a somewhat richer interpretation of development - not because such an interpretation is necessarily required by all uses of the word, but because it brings out a relevant continuity between the kinds of case we are interested in here.

Often when we use the notion of development in an evaluatively positive way, we have in mind that the development of X involves the attainment or maintenance of some sort of unity or coherence in X. The development of an argument, for instance, results in a position which hangs together rather than falling apart. Similarly for a person, we would see the attainment of integrity and a sense of identity as development, but going to pieces mentally is not the sort of thing we mean by personal development. Moral development of the individual is in most accounts (if they go

beyond reference to observable behaviour) a development which results in some sort of coherent set of values and a consistent way of exercising them; whether we follow Kohlberg, or an Aristotelian virtue ethic, or a feminist ethic centred on caring, we will consider that the morally developed person has 'got it together' to a greater extent than the less developed. In discussions of spiritual development there is often the idea of a person attaining some sort of coherent sense of his or her place in the world - which is contrasted with the kind of floundering in which people have no idea of who or what they are, and perhaps change their ideas from one day to the next. Of course, a lot of floundering may take place along the road of spiritual development, but it's not the kind of thing that would be seen as a desirable end-point.

If this is the way we are using the notion of development, then the moral or spiritual development of society would also be a development towards some sort of coherence or unity - and that would have to be, not just within individual members of the society, but across the society.

For spiritual development, at the level of the whole society we would be looking for an analogue of a person's having a coherent sense of his or her place in a wider scheme of things. It is also important, and in line with a number of accounts in the literature, that in the individual case we would expect that this sense of 'place' - which we could also call a sense of 'meaning' - would be both cognitive and affective, and that the two elements would be integrated. Thus while it is a possible condition that someone has an intellectual sense of their place in the universe but feels alienated from it, we would expect spiritual development to be towards a more integrated outlook in which reason and feeling do not come apart.

If this kind of account is right, there are two reasons why it is difficult, in a plural society, to use the notion of the spiritual development of society. First, in such a society there will not be a shared understanding, even on a verbal level, of the human condition and of the place of persons within some wider scheme of

things.[2] Secondly, if affective experience is indispensable to spiritual development, then the relevant shared understanding across a society would have to be not just cognitive but affective also. Is such a thing possible?

In certain conditions, it probably is. We can talk of people sharing an experience, in a sense that involves mutual recognition and empathy: the sense, roughly, in which two people who know each other well, sitting in the same room listening to a piece of music, may be sharing the experience of that music, whereas two strangers, in different rooms, listening to the same piece of music on the radio, are not sharing the experience of it.[3] Extending that sort of case, we could probably make sense of the idea that a community of worshippers could develop spiritually not just as individuals but as a group. But such development would depend crucially on both shared background assumptions and shared experience - just the elements which are missing across the life of a whole society in modern conditions.[4]

The moral development of society

I suggest, then (though I have not tried to argue the point in detail) that we have to reach a negative conclusion about the possibility of the spiritual development of a modern plural society. But it does not follow that the conclusion about moral development will be negative. To the contrary, there are at least

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[2] I am not suggesting that such a shared understanding is an impossibility in all places and at all times; it may have been present in the past in certain societies with a strongly held and shared religious faith.

[3] Cf. Taylor (1989a) p. 169

[4] It may be true that many people shared in the experience of grief after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. More would be needed before we could say (as was suggested by some commentators) that this experience contributed towards the spiritual development of the nation. We would need some idea of how widely the grief was in fact shared; media reporting may have been misleading in neglecting the numbers who remained relatively indifferent. We would also need to know more of the character of what was experienced; given the scope for different interpretations of the significance of the life and death of Diana, was it the same experience that was shared by so many? In any case, one shared experience would not constitute a development of society unless it had lasting effects which were not reducible to the effects on the individuals concerned.

two complementary reasons for distinguishing the cases. First, to repeat a point I made in Chapter 3, we do not have to give a central place to the affective in all interpretations of moral development. At the level of public discourse the more cognitive, linguistically expressed aspect of morality can, so to speak, take on a life of its own, so that what there is convergence on at that level is not dependent on each individual party to the public discourse having the same feelings, or any particular feeling.

Secondly, there are in fact several possibilities for convergence at the level of public discourse where morality is concerned. Reviewing these here will also serve as a summary of some of some of the points for which I have argued in this thesis.

1) Though it may sound paradoxical to start with this, there can come to be greater mutual understanding of differences in values and in conceptions of morality. As I argued in Chapter 2, one of the educational tasks in relation to values is to promote understanding of the diversity found within modern societies. In such societies there are likely in the foreseeable future to be different conceptions of morality co-existing (secular and religious understandings, for instance), not to mention different values across the whole broader field of values. The existence of such differences is not, of course, a case of convergence; but there could be convergence towards a shared understanding of the differences which exist. Within an understanding of the human condition in both its biological and cultural respects it is understandable that there will be differences in beliefs and values. A society in which, through education, such an understanding is promoted will in one sense be a better educated society, and is likely to be a more tolerant society, than one in which people find the values of others unintelligible.

2) Even while different values and different understandings of morality in the broader sense co-exist, it should be possible for people to share an understanding of morality(n). (This especially brings out the difference between the spiritual and moral cases; while in a plural society there will not be convergence on the

meaning of 'life, the universe, and everything', there could be convergence on the meaning of morality(n).) It may be that already many people do think of morality in something like this way, but such an understanding co-exists with a variety of other beliefs and attitudes about morality. I have argued that educators, while not denying and certainly not attempting to suppress other understandings, can quite consciously seek to promote a shared understanding of the nature and importance of morality(n).

3) If society is to converge on a shared understanding of morality(n), then it needs a common language in which to articulate that understanding. Actually it is not strictly true that there must be one common language; there could be a plurality of, perhaps overlapping, languages, provided that each is understood by all. And I have in fact suggested that there is a role in public discourse for both a language of rules and principles and a language of virtues. I have also suggested that we are at present some way off having a shared language of virtues, and that a language of rules and principles has a certain priority in the articulation of morality(n).

4) For morality(n) to fulfil its function, it is not sufficient for people to recognise the concept and have a common language in which to articulate their understanding; it is also necessary that there be at least a degree of consensus on the content of morality(n), though this consensus needs to be subject to criticism and change.

All these forms of convergence, then, can be seen as constitutive of the moral development of society: that a society comes to share an understanding of its differences, to share an understanding of the idea of morality(n), to have a common language for the articulation of morality(n), and to agree - at least to some extent - on the content of morality(n). I shall pause at this point to consider briefly whether we have any reason to think the fourth kind of convergence is likely.

Many people would suggest that modern societies have been changing in exactly the opposite direction, away from agreement on any moral norms (and my own stress on diversity might superficially seem to be endorsing this). Yet there are some areas in which, plausibly, certain substantive moral positions are much more widely held now than used to be the case: the moral wrongness, for instance, of discrimination on grounds of race. The appearance of great diversity may in part be the result of our failing to make the distinction between morality(n) and other fields of values.

It might be objected that convergence of this kind is in what people say, not necessarily in their private opinions or their actions. But this is part of the point: there has in certain matters been convergence in public moral discourse, on what can acceptably be said and on what must be taken into account. And in all sorts of social and political ways, that itself is morally important. It is morally important, for instance, that there be a public recognition of equality across ethnicity and gender, even if that recognition is not shared privately, or on an affective level, by all members of the society (cf. White, P. 1996, p. 73). And it is morally important that there be a public recognition that certain sorts of behaviour are not to be tolerated.

So this convergence at the level of public discourse on certain values is one aspect of the moral development of a society. It is important too that people become aware of their convergence - it is not just that as a matter of fact individuals become less inclined to say certain things and more inclined to say others, but that people are mutually aware of this fact, and take it into account in their own speech and action. We could say, rather high-falutingly, that this is a development in the moral self-awareness of a society.

The forms of convergence I have picked out so far have not included the idea that people will behave better - even according to norms which are publicly agreed. I have not stressed this point so far because I wanted to distinguish my understanding of the

moral development of society from the purely reductionist notion which would have it that this moral development consists simply in people behaving better. But having seen that there are various possibilities of convergence at the level of public discourse that can be constitutive of the moral development of society, it is not unreasonable to ask whether these kinds of convergence, up to and including agreement on norms of conduct, would do anything to make it likely that people would actually conform to the norms on which they agree. Of course, convergence in public discourse cannot guarantee anything about what people will do; nor can any aspect of moral education or citizenship education, though we can reasonably expect that a mixture of approaches, provided they are not incompatible with each other, will have more effect than any single approach.

That said, there are grounds for thinking that convergence in public discourse will make a difference to individuals that will, for many of them, go beyond lip-service. Moral ideas and moral language, and thoughts expressed in such language, will make a difference to people's conduct to the extent that people take these ideas seriously.[5] People are more likely to take these ideas and this language seriously if they can see themselves as involved in morality, rather than perceiving morality as an alien imposition on them. My stress on understanding and - where appropriate - convergence at the public level, and hence my concern for education towards this public understanding, has been motivated by the concern that we should be able to continue to take morality seriously.

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5 Iris Murdoch - whose main preoccupation was not with morality(n) - makes a similar point: 'Lip service is not to be despised. The triumph of good causes partly depends on people, at some point, becoming ashamed of saying certain things.' (1993, p. 358)

Appendix 1

Review of Smith & Standish (eds.) *Teaching Right and Wrong: Moral Education in the Balance*

(This review was published in *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28 2 June 1998)

This is a collection of predominantly philosophical papers that claims particular topical relevance at this time. The immediate historical context is the two year period that began with a SCAA conference on moral and spiritual development in January 1996, leading *via* the deliberations of the National Forum on Values in Education and the Community, to the formulation of guidance for schools which is now being piloted.

Two years would not have seen most books from conception to publication. So congratulations are due to the editors and publisher on getting the book out quickly enough to comment on the SCAA - and now QCA - initiative while it is still continuing. The inevitable downside of this same success is that the targets of criticism are receding into history even as they are aimed at. Nigel Blake effectively demolishes the discussion paper which reported on the January 1996 conference; but that paper is probably already among the ephemera on the shelf. There is something of a preoccupation in several papers with issues about relativism and absolutes which figured in Nick Tate's speech to the 1996 conference but which the Forum (of which I was a member) had already put behind it. What probably will be less ephemeral - if only because it forms a small part of the guidance to schools - is the Forum's Statement of Values, with its preamble. That is helpfully reprinted here, together with an explanation and defence by Marianne Talbot and Nick Tate, but the contributors who are critical of the Forum's general approach miss the opportunity to comment in detail on the published text, which teachers may well have to refer to. Does the preamble make misleading claims about the status of the values in the list? *Could* the items in the list be intended as absolute rules? More problematically, are they all intended as *moral* values or are they more miscellaneous?

In the end, then, only two cheers for immediate topicality. But, as the editors say, the matters discussed are in one sense timeless. If there is a common view here it is that the moral life is complicated, that there are no quick fixes; above all that morality cannot be taught as a separate compartment of life because it is

interwoven with our everyday concerns. Perhaps this common theme itself could have been subjected to closer scrutiny. *Of course* morality is not a watertight compartment; but neither is it just an arbitrary selection out of a sea of undifferentiated values. (Smith and Standish themselves - p. 141 - clearly acknowledge that moral values are not just any values).

So *what* is special about morality? As the editors don't comment on individual papers, apart from that by Talbot and Tate, the reader will be left to discern whether there is a common answer among the contributors; I suspect there is not. If there is one kind of voice missing from the collection, it is one that would elaborate and defend the view that we *can* draw and *should* stress the distinction between a morality which is binding on all and the wider sphere of the ethical in which there is room for different choices.[1] The 'seamless web' view of the all-pervasiveness of morality tends to downplay such a distinction.

The emphasis on the interweaving of morality within everyday life will also give little reassurance to those who are asking 'Does moral education have any power to save us from the worst extremes of human behaviour?' Though there are several references to the murders of Jamie Bulger and Philip Lawrence, John White tells us (though I am lifting the remark out of context): 'killing a human being belongs to the realm of the unthinkable'. If only it did. The psychoanalytic approach by Michael Rustin comes closer to addressing this concern.

Apart from Rustin's paper, most are by prominent members of the British philosophy of education community, or by other philosophers well known to that community (Midgley, Skillen). So is the collection worth reading? Of course it is. I have already recommended it to my students.

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[1] Note added to Appendix: Given that John White in his chapter distinguishes basic moral rules from virtues it may be that his should be counted as such a voice. Cf. my comments on White's position in Chapter 7, note 3.

Appendix 2
The SCAA Forum

SCAA's interest in values education seems to go back to the organisation's inception (when it took over from the NCC), and to be due perhaps in large part to the concerns of Nick Tate, Chief Executive of SCAA. During the Autumn of 1995 SCAA was planning a conference on 'Education for Adult Life', to take place in London in January 1996. Between the planning and the event the London headteacher Philip Lawrence was murdered by a teenager outside the gates of his school; as a response to the murder there were calls in the media for renewed attention to moral education in schools. But for that, possibly the conference itself might have escaped public notice, but it was in fact quite widely reported.[1]

The proposal to set up a National Forum on Values was made at the conference and adopted. An attempt was made to make the membership of the Forum representative of a wide range of opinion, not by random sampling but by drawing members - 150 in total - from a wide range of organisations, faith communities and interest groups. It was deliberate that the Forum did not represent only 'Education' but also the 'Community' - though in John White's view (1998 p. 17) it nevertheless had a 'heavy weighting towards the educational world'.

The Forum was given a dual remit: to see whether there were any values upon which there was agreement across society; and to see how schools could be supported in their task of promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The two parts of the remit were addressed sequentially. The first stage of the work lasted for about a year from Spring 1996; only after a Statement of Values had been drawn up was the second part of the remit addressed.

The Statement of Values was divided into four contexts or domains: 'the self', 'relationships', 'society' and 'the environment'.[2]

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1 Marianne Talbot and Nick Tate, referring to these events in their contribution to *TRAW*, say that the conference 'coincided' with Lawrence's murder (p. 2); it was actually about a month later. Nigel Blake is mistaken, or at least misleading, in saying in the same volume (p. 120) that 'the conference.... was a conscious and explicit response to' the murder. Much that was said at the conference may have been an explicit response to the murder, but the conference had been planned some time before.

2 The Forum's Statement of Values, including its Preamble, is included here as Appendix 3.

Where did these come from? As White (1998 p. 17) correctly surmises, 'once the Forum began to meet there must have been some way of managing its deliberations so as to eventuate in the neat, four-category list of values.' He goes on to ask: 'What part did SCAA officials and consultants play in this? How far did they regiment what must have been pretty diverse and diffuse data into more manageable categories unconsciously reflecting their own value-preferences?' (*ibid.*)

Certainly the initial getting together of a draft was not the work of the whole Forum collectively. The 150 members were divided into 10 groups, each made up of people sharing certain interests (I was in an 'academic and researchers' group). All but one of these groups had three meetings during the Spring and Summer of 1996. After the first meeting of each group, the group came back for its second meeting to consider a draft, which was further revised before the next meeting, and so on. One SCAA official [3] attended virtually all of the meetings and, as I understand it, was largely responsible for the drafts which were written, circulated, criticised and revised during the first round of three meetings for each group. The set of four categories was settled during this period though not from the beginning; I recall that at one stage 'family' and 'community' were candidate categories. Presumably the categories were intended to reflect the concerns which were actually coming out of the groups; beyond that I have no way of answering the questions 'how much regimentation did the writer of the drafts do?' and 'how far was it according to her own value-preferences?'.

The general outlines of the Statement had been completed by the end of the Summer of 1996. During the Autumn the Statement was put out to consultation and into the public domain. It was then further revised on the basis of the consultation. What was very nearly the final version was agreed by a plenary session (the only meeting of the whole Forum together) in January 1997. The final report from SCAA to the Secretary of State for Education of the Forum's work on the first part of the remit was delayed until after the general election of May 1997.

Formally speaking, the Forum as originally constituted, having agreed the Statement of Values, then gave SCAA the authority to take the work forward so as to address the second part of the remit. After that the original Forum as such had no further

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3 Barbara Wintersgill, whose background was as an adviser on religious education. (The philosopher Marianne Talbot, of Brasenose College, Oxford, came on the scene as a consultant a little later).

meetings, though many of the same 150 individuals were consulted - along with many new contacts - in the next stage of the work.

In responding to the second part of the remit, SCAA had to come up with guidance for schools which in some way addressed the OFSTED categories of development - spiritual, moral, social and cultural. Even if these had not been written into the original remit, it would have been difficult for any guidance to be taken seriously by schools if it did not make use of the categories on which the schools were to be inspected. So (whether by oversight or design is unclear to me) SCAA had the task of reconciling the four contexts of values in the Statement - self, relationships, society and environment - with the OFSTED categories. The way of doing this, depending on how you look at it, was either brilliantly simple or simply simple-minded. Construct a four-by-four grid. Along the top enter the OFSTED categories, in the form 'pupils develop spiritually by ..... ; pupils develop morally by .....; and so on. Down the left-hand side enter the Forum Statement contexts, expressed as '... learning to value themselves [in the following ways]....; learning to value relationships.....; and so on. Then you have 16 boxes, ready to be filled in with detailed statements of objectives.[4]

Notice that given this cross-cutting of the two sets of categories, the category of moral development now involves all four contexts of self, relationships, society and environment. And this indeed might be what we would expect. But then each of the other categories of development - spiritual, cultural and social - is also supposed to involve values in all four contexts. At this point one may well wonder whether any clear conception is operating of what constitutes the moral (or, for that matter, the spiritual, cultural or social).

Even in an appendix, I shall spare the reader details of how the four-by-four grid became a six-layered three dimensional matrix, thereby containing 96 boxes. Before the guidance was piloted in schools this had been mercifully simplified (somewhat); I have said more about the form of the guidance in Haydon(1998).

The piloting began in Autumn 1997 and was due to last two years. At the time of writing (now Autumn 1999) I have heard little

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[4] I was one of those invited to help fill in the boxes, in a process lasting over several months from April 1997. The basic form of the grid was already at that point a *fait accompli*, apparently agreed at a conference somewhere around March 1997.

more about the piloting exercise, but I gather that a reduced version of the guidance on SMSC development is to be produced.

Meanwhile we now know that the National Curriculum as revised from 2000 will contain explicit attention to values under the headings of PSHE and Citizenship Education. Each of these areas has had a separate working party looking at it. The work of the SCAA Forum, then, will at most be one among several influences on the way in which education after 2000 deals with matters of values. The new rationale for the school curriculum (DfEE website, Autumn 1999), under the heading 'Values and purposes underpinning the school curriculum' contains a footnote reading 'In planning their curriculum schools may wish to take into account the statement of values (May 1997) finalised after widespread consultation by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community'. It is unclear as yet whether the Statement will make any further appearance in the documentaton on PSHE and Citizenship.[5]

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5 White says (1998 p. 16) that 'SCAA's search for shared values has been translated directly into policy decisions.' This now seems an overstatement.

Appendix 3

The 'Statement of Values' produced by the SCAA Forum for Values in Education and the Community
(circulated by SCAA in 1997)

The Preamble to the Statement of Values[1]

The National Forum for Values in Education and the Community was set up by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority to:

1. discover whether there are any values upon which there is common agreement within society;

2. decide how schools might be supported in the important task of contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The Forum identified a number of values on which members believed society would agree. Extensive consultation showed there to be overwhelming agreement on these values.

The second part of the remit was met by the recommendation that SCAA produce guidance for schools on the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This guidance, it was recommended, should be structured around the contexts of value, build upon current good practice, encourage rigour and a whole-school approach to work in this area and be supported by booklets of case studies, a directory of resources, a glossary of the terms commonly used in this area and guidelines for community service. It was also recommended that the guidance include suggestions on how the school might involve the local community in work in this area. SCAA was also asked to use the statement of values nationally to instil confidence, trigger debate and elicit support for schools in the vital task of promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. This work is currently being planned.

It is important to note the following points:

- The remit of the Forum was to decide whether there are any values that are commonly agreed upon across society, not whether there are any values that *should* be agreed upon

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1 [GH:] This Preamble is probably the work largely of Marianne Talbot. Note 2 below is part of the Preamble.

across society. The only authority claimed for these values, accordingly, is the authority of consensus.

- These values are not exhaustive. They do not, for example, include religious beliefs, principles or teachings, though these are often the source from which commonly-held values derive. The statement neither implies nor entails that these are the *only* values that should be taught in schools. There is no suggestion, in particular, that schools should confine themselves to these values.

- Agreement on the values outlined below is compatible with disagreement on their sources. Many believe that God is the ultimate source of value, and that we are accountable to God for our actions; other that values have their source only in human nature, and that we are accountable only to our consciences. The statement of values is consistent with these and other views on the sources of value.

- Agreement on the values is also compatible with different interpretations and applications of these values. It is for schools to decide, reflecting the range of views on the wider community, how these values should be interpreted and applied. So, for example, the principle 'we support the institution of marriage' may legitimately be interpreted as giving rise to positive promotion of marriage[2] as an ideal, of the responsibilities of parenthood, and of the duty of children to respect their parents.

- The ordering of the values does not imply any priority or necessary preference. The ordering reflects the belief of many that values in the context of the self must precede the development of the other values.

- These values are so fundamental that they appear unexceptional. Their demanding nature is however demonstrated both by our collective failure consistently to live up to them, and the moral challenge which acting on them in practice entails.

Schools and teachers can have confidence that there is general agreement in society upon these values. They can therefore

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Note

[2] In British law, marriage is defined as 'the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others'.

expect the support and encouragement of society if they base their teaching and the school ethos on these values.

The Statement of Values

The Self

We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- develop an understanding of our own characters, strengths and weaknesses
- develop self-respect and self-discipline
- clarify the meaning and purpose in our lives and decide, on the basis of this, how we believe that our lives should be lived
- make responsible use of our talents, rights and opportunities
- strive, throughout life, for knowledge, wisdom and understanding
- take responsibility, within our capabilities, for our own lives.

Relationships

We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and to the good of the community.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- respect others, including children
- care for others and exercise goodwill in our dealings with them
- show others they are valued
- earn loyalty, trust and confidence
- work co-operatively with others

- respect the privacy and property of others
- resolve disputes peacefully.

Society

We value truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort for the common good. In particular, we value families as sources of love and support for all their members, and as the basis of a society in which people care for others.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- understand and carry out our responsibilities as citizens
- refuse to support values or actions that may be harmful to individuals or communities
- support families in raising children and caring for dependants
- support the institution of marriage
- recognise that the love and commitment required for a secure and happy childhood can also be found in families of different kinds
- help people to know about the law and legal processes
- respect the rule of law and encourage others to do so
- respect religious and cultural diversity
- promote opportunities for all
- support those who cannot, by themselves, sustain a dignified lifestyle
- promote participation in the democratic process by all sectors of the community
- contribute to, as well as benefit fairly from, economic and cultural resources
- make truth, integrity, honesty and goodwill priorities in public and private life.

The Environment

We value the environment, both natural and shaped by humanity, as the basis of life and a source of wonder and inspiration.

On the basis of these values, we should:

- accept our responsibility to maintain a sustainable environment for future generations
- understand the place of human beings within nature
- understand our responsibilities for other species
- ensure that development can be justified
- preserve balance and diversity in nature wherever possible
- preserve areas of beauty and interest for future generations
- repair, wherever possible, habitats damaged by human development and other means.

Appendix 4
Morality(n) and the language of rights

Stout (1988) has described our contemporary condition as a moral Babel, in which there are many co-existing but not necessarily compatible moral languages. As Stout points out, some people believe that the best recourse in such conditions is to some thin language which can serve as a 'moral pidgin' or 'moral Esperanto'. The language of rights can seem to offer such a moral Esperanto, especially perhaps if one follows the Germanic tradition in treating morality(n) as the morality of *Recht* (see the reference to Lukes on Marx towards the end of Chapter 4).

In particular, the notion of human rights has been catching on as providing a basic code of conduct within plural societies. In discussions of moral education and citizenship education, I encounter people who seem to believe that while the idea of morality (and hence moral education) is irredeemably subject to problems of authoritarianism, relativism and so on, the idea of human rights (and hence an education which insists on these rights) is unchallengeable bedrock. Such people would perhaps prefer to give up talking about morality altogether, except as a subjective matter for individual or cultural choice. For them, in effect, the function of morality(n) could be served purely by a language of rights; nothing else would be necessary. It is this kind of view that I want to examine, and reject, in this appendix.

In speaking now of a language of rights we are not talking just of any discourse in which mention of rights could feature. There is a sense in which virtually any norm for conduct could be expressed in terms of rights. 'Try to develop understanding and tolerance of other people's point of view' could be expressed (though not without some change in sense) as 'people have a right that others try to develop understanding and tolerance of their point of view'. Or in a legal context, where talk of rights is often less strained, the law which says one should drive on the left could be interpreted as establishing that drivers have a right not to be stopped by the police for driving on the left. If, however, a language of rights is to do some job which could not be done by a language of norms more generally, it will need to function by picking out some set of rights which can be seen as basic or fundamental, perhaps in the sense of pre-existing any particular norms which might be established to protect that right. Clearly the right not to be stopped for driving on the left is not basic or pre-existing in that sense; if the law in question does protect some basic right this will be something like the right of road users generally to security of

life and limb. And the norms of tolerance and understanding might be seen as protecting some more fundamental right, perhaps the right to be treated with respect. It is clearly at this sort of level that talk of human rights is often seen as appropriate.

Let us say that the language of rights seems to serve the same function as morality(n) inasmuch as it serves to protect or promote vital interests. This is not uncontroversial. There are views by which rights-language essentially protects a sphere of an individual's choice, or a sphere within which the individual's own will can be exercised. But if the rationale for a language of rights is to be consistent with morality(n), the exercise of individual will or choice will be protected only insofar as this is seen as a protection of interests, though the notion of interests need not be narrowly interpreted. And there are at least two ways in which the exercise of choice can be seen as an interest needing protection: either it is taken to be a basic interest of human beings, being the kind of creatures they are, that they should be able to make some decisions for themselves and have some control over their own lives; or less ambitiously, it can be seen as a necessary interest of human beings *within a certain kind of society* that they should have this sphere of choice.[1] Mill, for instance, in *Utilitarianism* Ch. 5, saw the recognition of rights as quite compatible with utilitarianism, so that the language of rights did not need to appeal to what he called in *On Liberty* 'the idea of abstract right, as a thing independent of utility': rights protected the human interest in security.

The way that rights (for convenience, I shall not always unpack this as 'the language of rights') function to protect particular interests is that they can block decision-making in terms of the overall balance of interests. That is, in Dworkin's (1977) metaphor, rights are trumps. It may seem paradoxical that a practice which can be used by or on behalf of individuals to block decision-making in terms of the overall balance of people's interests can nevertheless be defended in utilitarian terms; but there is a considerable body of work which does just this (in addition to Mill himself, see e.g. Gray 1984).

I see no reason why such a notion of rights might not be recognised within morality(n). A variety of welfare rights might also be recognised. What is very doubtful is whether the language of rights could function as the whole of morality(n). It seems just

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1 Cf. the argument, referred to in Chapter 2, by which Raz 1986, p. 391, and White 1990 pp. 103-4, defend the value of autonomy.

too minimal; or more accurately, does not even provide the minimum that morality(n) needs. We can see this if we think within an educational context.

Suppose we try to postulate a moral system composed of nothing but rights. We can call the advocate of such a position a rights-minimalist. Such a person could give an account of the content of the public understanding of morality: it would consist in knowledge of what rights people have, together with an understanding of the rationale for these rights. But what account can the rights-minimalist give of moral *upbringing* and *education*, especially where relatively young children are concerned?

It is going to be relevant, within the rights-minimalist position, to ask whether children themselves do or do not have rights. This is not the place to enter into a general discussion of children's rights. The topic has been much debated, but, significantly for the present discussion, the debate has gone on within an assumption that the language of rights exists alongside other languages of evaluation.[2] Within a broader understanding of the kind of moral considerations available, even a denial of rights to children does not mean that children are left outside of moral consideration altogether. (A similar point holds for animals if animal rights are denied). In contrast, within a morality in which there is no language but that of rights, children (like animals) must themselves have rights if they are to have any place within the moral system at all.

What kind of rights might they have? Minimally, they might have only certain welfare rights - a right to be cared for when unable yet to care for themselves. But this would be an unstable position within a rights-morality which allots to adults various rights of control over their own lives. For if a person is, as a child, brought up in a way that predetermines the choices he or she will make in his or her later life, that person's right of control, as an adult, over his or her own life seems to have been prejudiced (since it will be as if someone else has exercised control over the adult's life, albeit from a certain temporal distance). This is, of course, a formulation of the classic liberal objection to indoctrination. It has led many liberals to uphold what Feinberg (1980) labelled 'the child's right to an open future', a right which is violated if influences are brought to bear on the child which effectively prevent him or her (perhaps at a much later date) from making important determining choices in his or her own life.

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[2]Cf. Wringe (1981); and commenting on this, Haydon (1987c).

Suppose, then, that rights-minimalists would want to uphold a child's right to an open future. They would then have to ask, about any proposal for moral upbringing, whether such an upbringing was compatible with the child's right to an open future. Insofar as moral education consisted simply in giving a child knowledge and understanding about his or her rights and those of other people, this would seem to be unproblematic (in fact, it might well be said that the child has a right to that knowledge and understanding).

But a moral education, compatible with the function of morality(n), could not plausibly consist only in knowledge and understanding. It matters not only that people know what rights others (and they themselves) have, but that they take them into account in their own conduct (there is no point in people being said to have rights if no one takes any notice of them). So if we are to have a workable system we have to postulate also something like appropriate responses to rights: I shall speak of 'respect for rights' as a shorthand. That gives us the idea of a morality which contains rights and respect for rights, but nothing else. Though it looks thin, the import of such a morality is by no means negligible; it would be the sort of morality that Kant refers to, but does not endorse, when he says in the *Groundwork*

'... if such an attitude were a universal law of nature, mankind could get on perfectly well - better no doubt than if everybody prates about sympathy and goodwill, and even takes pains, on occasion, to practise them, but on the other hand cheats where he can, traffics in human rights, or violates them in other ways.' (1948, p. 86).

The problem about early moral upbringing now is whether the promotion of a respect for rights would not itself be a violation of the rights of the individual child. If we put great weight on the individualism of rights, where rights function only to 'ring-fence' the interests of each individual, it might even seem that the only kind of moral education strictly consistent with the rights of each child would be an education that gives her the determination to defend her own rights at all costs (for why should it necessarily be in her own interests that she should respect the rights of others?).

It might be possible to argue our way around this kind of extreme individualism, perhaps by an argument similar to that of Gewirth (1977) to the effect that if one claims one's own rights one must recognise those of others (for criticism of Gewirth see MacIntyre 1981 pp. 64-5; Williams 1985 p. 210). But would it be clear even

then that giving a child a rights-minimalist upbringing would avoid any violation of the child's own rights?

It is no doubt true that liberals of an individualist or libertarian tendency have been attracted towards forms of moral upbringing as minimalist as possible, for fear that anything more will involve moulding the child according to society's interests. And a system that, if it has to instil or inculcate anything, instils or inculcates nothing but respect for rights, seems to fit the bill. But appearances may be misleading. The rights-minimalist upbringing must try to ensure that each individual takes the language of rights seriously. What is presupposed in taking this language seriously? One of two things: either the individual has to believe that there really are such things as moral rights - where this is some kind of metaphysical, ontological claim; or the individual has to believe that there are good reasons for using this kind of language even though in a metaphysical sense moral rights do not really exist.

The first approach to a rights-minimalist upbringing requires the educators to ensure that people come to hold certain beliefs which are in fact eminently debatable - as is shown both by the fact that many cultures have apparently managed without such beliefs (though they were not without morality(n)), and by modern philosophical debate. To MacIntyre (1981 p.67), a claim that human rights exist is an ontological claim on a par with a claim that unicorns or witches exist. If a rights-minimalist upbringing really has to ensure that everybody holds such a belief, then it begins to look much less minimal after all; it begins to look as indoctrinatory as is (to many liberal educationalists) an upbringing which commits the individual to believing in God. If on the other hand a rights-minimalist education, putting the rights of the individual educatee first, were to encourage critical thinking about the existence of rights, it might well turn out that most people would end up as sceptics.

The alternative approach looks more plausible - that individuals be educated so that they come to believe, not that rights are actually existent entities of some kind, but that talk of rights has its place in a social practice, and that there are good reasons for engaging in this practice. But again, if children are not to be indoctrinated into accepting without question that they *must* engage in this practice, that is, actually take the rights of others into account, they must be allowed to question that very proposition. And rights-minimalism in itself will have given no one any basis other than self-interest on which to answer his or

her own questions, once s/he begins to ask 'What reason is there for *m e* to engage in this practice, rather than free-riding on other people's willingness to engage in it?'.

The problem here is that rights-minimalism in itself cannot assume anything like a benevolent disposition on the part of each person. This means that a strictly minimalist upbringing which consists of nothing but initiation into a practice of rights cannot guarantee that it will not be self-defeating. It might give children as they grow up nothing but a knowledge of the language of rights, without their having any tendency to take that language seriously to the extent of actually respecting the rights of others, or the seriousness of the claims of others upon them. Thus, in the realm of public understanding, mere knowledge of the language of rights would not - without appropriate underlying dispositions - ensure the survival of a practice of rights. It appears then that the person who takes rights seriously must support a form of moral upbringing that goes further than the rights-minimalist position, in that it encourages the development of benevolent dispositions. If that is correct, then public discourse about morality - even where this is explicitly restricted to morality(n) - cannot reasonably be restricted to a language of rights.

Another way of showing this is by reflecting on the idea that people may in certain circumstances - indeed in many circumstances in a society which is at all liberal - have a right to make their own moral decisions, and more generally to lead their own lives, provided they do not violate the rights of others. We could argue that if people do make their own decisions, they will sometimes (inevitably) make decisions which are not, morally, the right or best ones. Thus if people have a right to make these decisions and put them into practice, there is a sense in which they have the right to make decisions which are wrong. This is sometimes referred to as a right to do wrong (a right to do something wrong might be better). Some find this idea impossibly paradoxical (cf. Brown 1986 p. 106); others have defended it in an explicitly liberal spirit (cf. Waldron 1993 Ch. 3; Dworkin 1977 pp. 188-9). It seems to me right to defend it, because if we say that, on occasions when people in fact make a wrong decision, they have no such rights, then we are in effect saying that people have in certain areas the right to make their own decisions provided they make the right decisions - to do their own thing provided they do the right thing - and that empties the notion of such a right of content.

Why might we think it important that people should have, across much of their lives, this right to lead their own moral lives? It may be for some people a rather specifically Kantian idea that heteronomous action cannot be moral at all; for others it may be part of the recognition of the value of autonomy in a not-very-Kantian sense. But it may also be because we recognise that many situations in which moral thinking has to be done are situations of great complexity (cf. Chapter 8) in which factors of many different kinds have to be considered. Only the individual most directly concerned may be able to see and appraise all the factors - or at least may come closer to being able to do this than anyone else. So in recognising people's right to make their own decisions we are at the same time recognising that the moral life contains more than just considerations of rights.

Having recognised a plurality of kinds of moral consideration, we can also recognise that the language of rights is not just thin but may also in some cases act as a distorting lens. Midgley (1991b, p. 105, italics in original) says

'*This is simply the most competitive and litigious of moral concepts*. If rights appear to clash, then one of them must give way. The legal model, which is very close here, dictates a zero-sum solution. If I win, you lose. There is a conceptual deadlock; the losing party must simply leave the court.'

As regards the legal model, this may be one of the places where we do not need to go all the way with the analogy. Though in *TAV* I took the same line as Midgley, claiming that in using the rights orientation 'the assumption is implicit that the solution must be all or nothing, one way or the other' (p.71) this is to ignore complexities to an extent that even the legal analogy does not mandate (the legal system is, after all, capable of adjudicating in some pretty complicated issues, and compromises are not unknown). As Archard (1992) points out in response to Midgley, in a real controversy in all its complexity (the issue in question is the one of parental rights and child abuse) even using the language of rights does not commit one to a zero-sum solution (one does not have to say that parents have either absolute rights over their children, or none at all). But the general point still stands, that using this language does predispose those using it to seeing issues in a conflictual way: a point made, even if sometimes overstated, by many defenders of an ethic of care against the justice-and-rights orientation in moral thinking (See also *TAV* p. 71). To that extent, an over-reliance on the language of rights could actually be antithetical to morality(n).

Appendix 5
Violence and the language of norms

In Chapter 6, by way of illustrating the importance both of a language of norms and of a language of virtues, I argued that we do need norms relating to violence. It is not part of my argument that the content of such norms is obvious. Within a shared understanding of the nature of morality(n), they would continue to be open to argument.

In his discussion in *TRAW*, for instance, White does not speak of a rule against violence as such; he sees the basic moral rules as ruling out 'injury' or, later, 'grievous bodily harm'. Violence, even violence which is unambiguously physical, does not always cause injury, and injury is not always grievous. The ruling out of violence as such would not be so uncontroversially part of the framework of basic rules to which White refers.

Publicly acknowledged norms, however, have to draw lines, and the lines have to be recognisable and applicable in practice. A line between some acceptable level of hurt and some unacceptable level of injury as a result of physical violence is going to be too easily blurred. Any physical violence, even if not intended to have serious results, runs the risk of doing so. And any physical violence at least raises a presumption that those on the receiving end are not being respected. There is reason, then, for erring on the side of caution and drawing the line against physical violence as such.

It is difficult, however, to rule out physical violence without ruling out more than that. Some schools have rules saying 'We keep our hands, feet and objects to ourselves' (cited by Skillen 1997 p. 376, but by no means unique to his children's school). This may indeed, as Skillen suggests (*ibid.* p. 381) 'suppress... the very impulses of friendship'; but it is presumably an attempt to set up the sort of norm which will at least ensure an absence of physical violence, until more subtle nuances can be appreciated. The initial improvement in subtlety needed here would be the realisation that it is possible for norms to refer to motivation (as in Griffin's example 'don't be cruel') and not only to the outwardly observable aspects of action.

If some sort of ruling out of interpersonal physical violence is taken here as basic and minimal, then there is a question of how far shared norms would go beyond the minimal. There are several ways in which the scope of norms against violence can be

understood more broadly. One question is whether the same norms apply in institutionalised contexts, of the police and military, for instance, as in 'private' interpersonal contexts. This is a question which in educational contexts provides ample scope for the kind of thinking about justification and criticism to which I referred in Chapter 12.

Probably more problematic, because it will seem to many to call into question the meaning of the word 'violence', are questions about what sort of actions and states of affairs, other than deliberate use of physical force by persons against persons with intent to hurt or harm, are to be brought under norms against violence. It is possible to give reasons for using the term 'violence' in a broader way (see *V V V* Ch. 1). But this is not just a question of semantics; the primary question is about the norms which are to constitute the content of a publicly shared morality(n). How a particular word is to be used, while far from unimportant, is - or can reasonably be treated as - a question about how our norms can best be articulated.

Norms that refer to the outwardly observable aspect of actions and norms that refer to motivation categorise conduct in different ways. The notion of violence cuts across both categorisations, which is one reason why it is so problematic. 'Keep your hands and feet to yourself', as Skillen notices, puts blows intended to hurt in the same category (probably unintentionally) as friendly pats on the back or hugs. 'Don't be cruel' puts blows intended to hurt in the same category as words intended to hurt. If 'don't be cruel' means something like 'don't cause pain for your own satisfaction', this can apply to the causing of emotional as well as of physical pain. If the cruel infliction of physical pain counts as violence, then so can the cruel infliction of emotional pain, which may or may not accompany physical pain. Thus it is possible to count some verbal attacks as violence, in a way fully compatible with what I said in Chapter 6 about the link between anger and violence:

> This kind of verbal violence frequently goes with anger and shouting, often directed at someone not in a position to answer back. The aim is to hurt the other person emotionally, to cause them mental pain and anguish. This can substitute for, or supplement, the causing of physical pain by bodily means. It can, indeed, be worse in its effects than passing physical violence. (McGinn 1992, p. 41).

What is important here, morally speaking, is that people should not do this sort of thing - in other words, a norm against behaving in a certain kind of way. Whether we call or don't call this way of behaving violent is surely not a question of great interest in its own right - other than a specialist lexicographical question - independently of the moral questions. One could argue the question of terminology both ways. On the one hand, if 'violence' is restricted to the physical variety, then 'don't be violent' sets up a clear line which people know they are not to transgress. Maybe in certain circumstances it is justifiable or excusable to get angry and to express the anger - and it may not be easy to stay on one side of the line between expressing justified criticism and being angry - but at least you know you must stop short of hitting the person. But by the same token, if you think that the most important thing is that you should not attack physically, you may feel justified in any amount of verbal attack, and go too far in that way. If we put great weight on a norm ruling out physical attack, we also have to accept a responsibility to moderate the forms of verbal assault we use.

Though the norms in such cases refer to the agent's motivation, they do also refer to harm done. Notice, for instance, that McGinn in the passage above does not simply equate the motivations behind certain verbal and physical attacks; he also points out that the effects of the one can be worse than that of the other. More generally, as I pointed out in Chapter 6, thinking in terms of norms for conduct does tend to direct our attention towards the consequences of actions. If we object to action which will cause injury, and object to this not because of the motivation of the agent, but because of the injury itself, then we have reason for objecting, not only to deliberate cruelty, but also, say, to the state of affairs which allows so many people to be killed and maimed in road accidents. If we count among physical harms, not only such things as being hit, stabbed or shot but also, say, dying of cold and hunger, then we have reason to object to the state of affairs which allows old people in affluent countries to die of cold in the winter, and many thousands in less affluent parts of the world to die of hunger. Since these are harms which could be avoided or at the very least mitigated through deliberate human action, it is not extending the meaning of the term unintelligibly to speak in such cases of violence by some people against others.

In that kind of case the extension of meaning putatively goes through because the causing of physical harm - or responsibility for avoidable physical harm - is still there. But the notion of psychological violence already shows that the element of physical

harm is not essential to the notion of violence. So the way is opened for a notion such as that of systemic violence (Chapter 6, text to note 1) which can refer to any 'institutional practice or procedure that adversely impacts on individuals or groups by burdening them psychologically, mentally, culturally, spiritually, economically or physically' (Epp and Watkinson, 1996, p. i), or the rather similar notion of structural violence which was probably first used by the peace researcher Galtung (1969).

At this point it should be clear that we have arrived at a notion rather close to that of injustice or oppression. My own feeling about this (which I do not take to have any argumentative or evidential value) is that at some point in the gradual extension of the meaning of 'violence' we have come too far from its central meaning. But the extensions are not arbitrary. It is worth remembering that, given the vulnerable physical nature of human beings, many forms of injustice and oppression do have physical effects in the end; the poor are more likely to get ill and do not (statistically speaking) live so long. (This is one of the main planks of Honderich's (1980) comparison between violence and injustice, though he himself keeps to a fairly restricted use of the term 'violence'). And there are strong arguments from moral philosophers (e.g. Glover 1977) for thinking that ordinary moral thinking puts too much weight on the distinction between acts and omissions.[1]

How violence is to be defined is not, to my mind, a question to be settled by philosophers; it is one to be worked out within the public sphere, as we try to articulate the norms by which we wish to and are prepared to live. There are in the public sphere sufficient arguments, difficult enough to ignore, in favour of expanding our understanding of violence, for it to be likely that the boundaries around a narrow understanding will not prove impregnable. This is something on which neither philosophers nor educationalists can legislate, though we can add our voices to the public discourse. To some degree we are observers, but we can remain ready to help people to think clearly and not to be misled by their language.

Will it then be an irrevocable loss of clarity if the term 'violence' comes to incorporate categories which our ancestors would not have recognised as violence? It will not, provided a degree of self-consciousness and reflectiveness about language can be

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1 Coady (1986) is a useful discussion of the arguments over the meaning of 'violence'; Coady himself defends a fairly conservative position.

retained (which points to a task for education). Will there be an irrevocable loss of moral clear-sightedness? Not necessarily; indeed it may be the other way round: we may be helped to see clearly wrongs that we might have overlooked before.

Acknowledgements, and sources of this thesis in my own earlier work.

The first fairly complete draft of this thesis was written in the summer of 1998, during a term's study leave from the Institute of Education, and the vacation following. At that stage John White read the draft and made comments which have been helpful in the subsequent restructuring and clarification of the argument.

During the autumn of 1998 I used the first draft as a basis for *Values, Virtues and Violence.* Following the completion of that, I have rewritten the thesis, incorporating new material and making numerous small alterations in the chapters used in *V V V.*

The result is that while there is considerable overlap between the thesis and *V V V*, the shared material is put in the content of a broader argument, set up by the Prologue and Chapters 1 and 2, which do not feature in *V V V* at all, and rounded off by newer points about citizenship education in Chapter 13. Where the material is common to both, most of it (with the exception of Chapter 6 and Appendix 5 of the thesis) was written first for the thesis.

The Prologue contains a paragraph or two from Haydon (1999d), Chapter 1 is partly derived from Haydon (1999c), Chapter 2 is partly derived from Haydon (1995), Chapter 3 and the Epilogue are developed from a talk given at the Department of Educational Studies, Oxford University, in November 1997.

Chapter 13 has some overlap with *V V V*, and also draws on conference and seminar presentations given at the Institute of Education in July 1999 and October 1999, and in Cambridge in September 1999.

Appendix 4 draws on, and adds to, Haydon (1993c).

Appendix 5 is adapted from part of Chapter 14 of *V V V.*

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